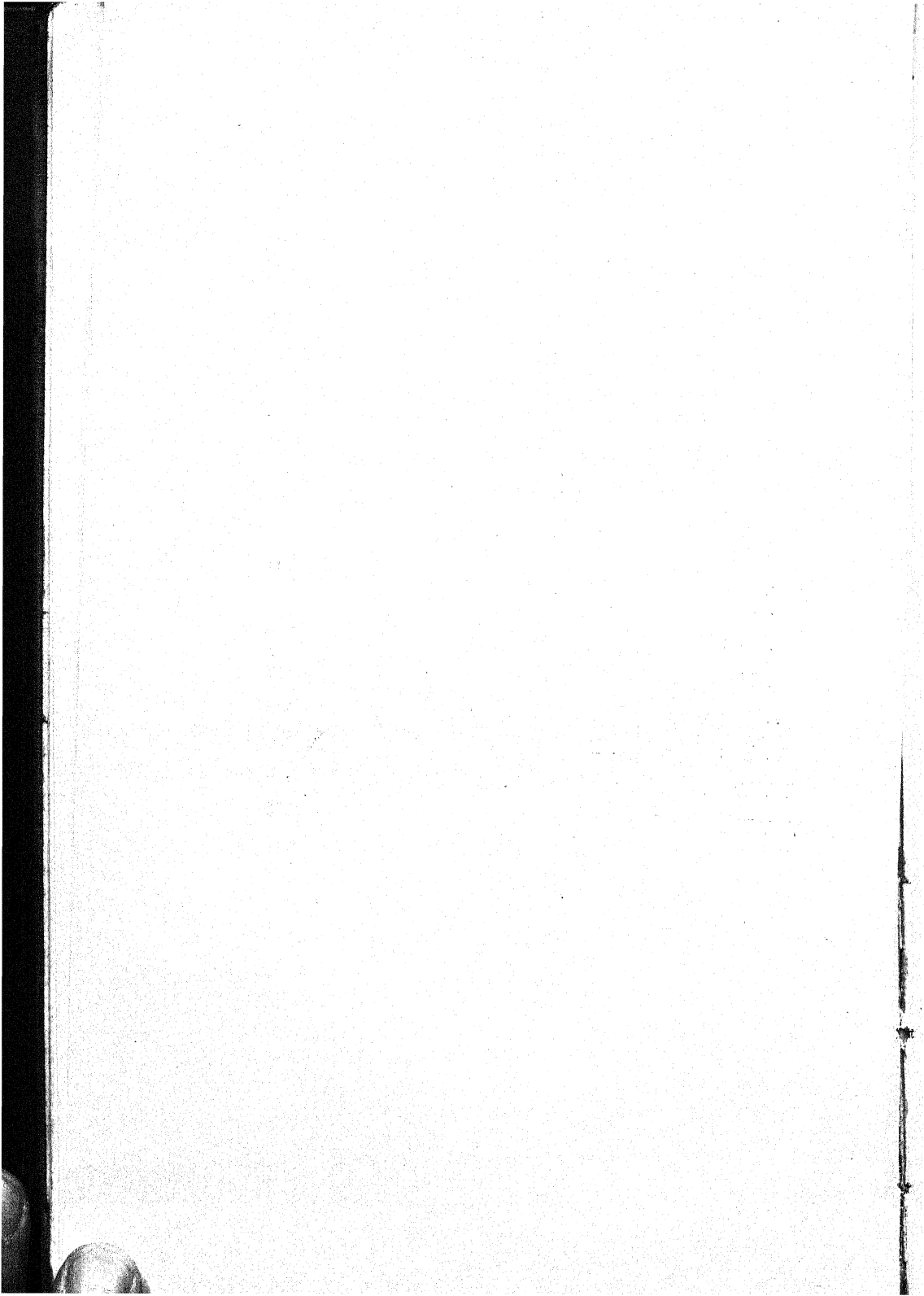


# THE BRITISH ARMY







A-12  
F. T. General  
OF INDIA

# THE BRITISH ARMY.

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" . . . . There is nothing so necessary as to look forward to future wars, and to our early preparation for them. Our wars have always been long and ruinous in expense, because we were unable to prepare for the operations which must have brought them to a close for years after they were commenced. But this system will no longer answer. . . . "—WELLINGTON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

SOLDIERS who speak and write upon the present position of the British army often complain of the little interest which is taken in the matter by civilians, and I feel that in writing on the British army as a civilian I am only accepting an invitation which soldiers have often given to their fellow-countrymen. At the same time I have not the presumption to write without military help for the details, and I have to thank several distinguished officers for their co-operation. I have also been aided by the fact that there is with regard to the chief military questions a *consensus* of opinion among foreign military writers, which generally coincides moreover with the promptings of common sense. Englishmen who are not soldiers are prone to avoid the subjects on which I am about to write, just as men in

general abstain as far as possible from living over undertakers' shops, or in streets where many funerals pass, or from indulging in speculation upon the accidents of life and upon their own latter end. There are a great many Englishmen who trust to the national good fortune and the national courage—the school of luck and pluck they might be called—to guard them against dangers which their reason and their knowledge lead them to know are real. Most Englishmen who read are aware that the invasion of England is a conceivable possibility, that we are not in a perfect condition of defence against it, and that invasion would mean public ruin; and when they think of these things by night they turn uneasily in their beds, but soon count up to a thousand or watch sheep jumping over a gate, or take some of the ordinary means of avoiding unpleasant thoughts, and go to sleep again. Some are inclined to dream that Mr. Stanhope's recent sacrifice of Mr. Henry Northcote\* on the altar of his country, and his other "Administrative Reforms," which I shall have to examine when I come to details, have at last made us safe. It is not denied that even the mere capture of London would be the downfall of Great Britain; that the weakening of the ties of empire, the loss of coaling stations and destruction of our international trade, the payment of immense indemnities, and the domestic discontent which would be produced by the enormous consequent increase of taxation, would mean the end of the Empire as at present constituted. I shall not here speak of risks such as are barely conceivable, but of the risks which we daily run. It is, of course, possible by an exercise of

\* Now Sir Stafford Northcote.

the imagination to conjure up the terror that France and Italy, or France and Germany, or France and the United States, or even, for the matter of that, a coalition of three or four or of all the Powers, may one day be arrayed in arms against us; but it is not of risks such as these that I shall write. I deal with the risks of such wars as those which might easily break forth in the present state of Europe, and I fear that I shall have to try to prove the truth of that which I firmly believe—that we are not, for example, at this moment in a position to fight even France alone, although our navy is no doubt still superior to the French, absolutely though perhaps not relatively, that is, having regard to what it has to do. Even when putting in a saving clause about the fleet I shall have to make it clear that our navy, owing to the weakness of our army, would be tied to the performance of work which does not lie within the proper sphere of the duties of a marine.

If Herr von Bunsen's warnings, in his *A German View of Mr. Gladstone*, are to be taken literally, we have to fear something more than war with either Russia by herself or France alone. It is known to those who can go behind the scenes in the Eastern theatre that after the rejection of the ratification of the Anglo-Turkish Convention as to Egypt, Germany pressed England to take a more active part in Eastern matters, promising Austrian and Italian support, and that Lord Salisbury, perhaps rightly, refused, to Prince Bismarck's annoyance, after which in August last came the German abandonment of Austria and deference to Russia in Bulgarian affairs. This fact gives weight to Herr von

Bunsen's words, threatening us that if England neglects Bulgaria, "and leaves Europe to take care of itself, she will force her natural friends and allies to save themselves by sacrificing her; and it will be a long time before Australia is strong enough to protect the United Kingdom and India from a Franco-Russian invasion."

In a series of articles upon the "Present Position of European Politics" which appeared lately in the *Fortnightly Review*,\* I pointed out the place which force now takes in the European world and the preparations which have been made by all the Great Powers except ourselves for guarding against the dangers of wars which they think inevitable. I showed the probability in the event of war between France and Germany of an infraction of the neutrality of Belgium, and discussed the wisdom of our trying to make up our mind as to whether we intended to defend that neutrality or whether we did not. In the earlier articles of the series we saw that England was hardly in a position to defend Turkey against Russia, any more than to defend Belgium against Germany or against France, and found that she was also not in a position, in the event of that war with Russia which is always possible, to make a counter-attack upon the Caucasus such as is recommended to us by many writers. In the article on "The United Kingdom" I counted up the risks that still unhappily exist of war between England and France, and the far greater risks of war sooner or later between Russia and Great Britain. I considered the unreadiness of England for war, and the

\* *Fortnightly Review*, January to June, 1887, inclusive.

dangers to British trade and to peace itself of the attitude of effacement which we were forced by our military weakness to adopt. I foreshadowed the probability of a temporary arrangement being come to between England and Russia because, as we saw, the condition of the Russian Asiatic railroads made it impossible for Russia as yet to attack India under such circumstances of advantage as later on would be found upon her side, and, at present, made delay advantageous to that empire. In the sixth article I drew from the discussion which had taken place after the appearance of my first and second articles the conclusion that it was unlikely, whatever individual wishes might be, that we should ever see England defending Belgium or Constantinople, inasmuch as it was impossible to shut one's eyes to the change of public sentiment since 1870 as regards Belgium, and since 1878 as regards Constantinople. I pointed out that it was impossible, even though the defence of Belgium and of Constantinople might be given up, for the United Kingdom to adopt a policy of disarmament without grave danger for her future. The defence of India had to be considered as well as that of our coaling stations and of our carrying trade, and in time of war we had to face a certain risk of invasion at home, and, what would be still worse, a greater risk of paralysis of the forces of the Empire caused by panic.

I know that when, at the beginning of 1887, war between Germany and France seemed likely, the British official mind contemplated the sending to Belgium of a Corps of Observation, but those who watch the House of Commons must

be certain that Lord Randolph Churchill and a section of independent Conservatives and Liberal Unionists would have joined the Opposition in protesting that the measure was inopportune, and must feel that the official horns would have been drawn in before Parliamentary attack. I maintain, then, the view that it is extremely improbable that we shall fight for Belgium.

Our enormous expenditure upon the Army and Navy was next considered, as were the excuses made for that annual expenditure of 51 or 52 millions sterling, and we saw that the result of nearly 40 millions sterling spent upon the Imperial army at home, in India, and in the Colonies, was that we possibly were able to put into the field against European troops a force equal to the army of Roumania. In the last chapter of the book in which the articles were reprinted \* I gave the result of the military criticisms, public and private, which had reached me, and which went to show that, sombre as was the view I had taken of the prospect of a Russian attack on India and of the many chances of its success, I had as a fact set too high the power of the British forces to resist invasion. I had not, it seemed, made sufficient allowance for the certainty of Russia being able to cause local uprisings in India as a diversion, and for the fact revealed in documents about which a great deal has been printed in "service" journals, that the British force in India is only just sufficient to garrison the country without providing for external wars. The highest military authorities in India hold that I have not set sufficiently high the risk of

\* *The Present Position of European Politics.* Chapman and Hall, 1887.

the Afghans ultimately taking the Russian side, or the risk of our native army turning against us in the event of their belief in us being shaken by the approach of the armies of a Great Power. Nor have I taken, I am told, sufficiently into account the probability that the people of Western Afghanistan and those of Northern Afghanistan, that is of Herat and of Afghan Turkestan, would welcome the Russians as deliverers from the Afghan yoke, while the armies of the native states, won over by Russian intrigue, would rise up against us in our rear.

There are some who think that it is undesirable to discuss these questions publicly, and that is an opinion worthy of careful attention. A Conservative journal of ability lately published an article, not indeed upon my former writings, which it criticized in a friendly manner, but upon the words of others, headed "More Reticence Needed." It charged some of those who have lately described in Parliament the present condition of the British forces as guilty of pessimistic exaggeration, and then said that the native Indian papers were commenting in a tone of panic upon recent revelations which had been intended "for home consumption." The article concluded by the statement that before representing England as wholly unprepared for war, those who were inclined to do so ought to reflect upon "the possible consequences outside the British Isles." Now, were it feasible in a democratic country, such as England has become, to trust this matter to the decision of the leading men, judging quietly what expenditure was necessary for the purpose of putting the country in a proper condition of defence, it might



perhaps be the wiser course not publicly to proclaim our military weakness. With us, however, such preparation in the dark is out of the question. By any possible reorganization of our forces, such as will make them of real efficiency in the field, many interests will be wounded, and the necessary leverage for undertaking so large a change cannot be obtained without publicity. Again, men like Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Picton, who may almost be said to oppose all military expenditure, have great, and, through their ability and honesty and services in different matters, on the whole deserved influence with the electorate, and unless the electors are clearly shown that the country is not safe as matters stand it will be impossible to induce the House of Commons to abstain from following Lord Randolph Churchill's advice and insisting upon suddenly and largely cutting down the estimates. Not that any one can be found to maintain that all that is spent now is well spent, but the people have to be shown that large expenditure not only upon naval but also upon military purposes is a necessity of the time. So much for publicity and its effect. It is in India alone that harm is done, harm which has, however, to be done that greater good may come. As regards damaging our interests in Europe by revelations of the weakness of our military position less need be said, inasmuch as the Intelligence Departments of modern continental armies are perfectly aware of the existing position of our forces and know the real nature of those forces better perhaps than we do ourselves. Parliamentary Committees and Royal Commissions, also, are daily revealing our weakness to the world.

At this point I must notice some very detailed and able criticisms of my views which have been appearing from July 1st in *Blackwood's Magazine*. The writer, who appears to some extent to question the opinions which I put forth, thinks that it is the duty of this country to others and to her own interest to defend by arms the neutrality of Belgium, a matter on which I expressed no opinion of my own, for the task which I had set myself was to look at facts and not to set up theories. He thus only increases the need which I fear exists for revolutionary change in our military system. At the same time my critic admits the present inefficiency of the Belgian army, and twice says in his September article that we cannot help Belgium unless she helps herself. He agrees with me that we have neither the men nor the ships which are necessary for the defence of the Empire, and he admits our present want of readiness for war. He is positive, however—and I envy him his firm belief—that when war comes upon us we shall have allies. I think him wrong upon this point, but unfortunately it is not necessary for my purpose that I should prove him wrong; it is enough that there should be a doubt, and surely few sane men will deny that there is a doubt. Is it not indeed plain that when we have to fight for India against Russia the cause of quarrel will be found by Russia in such a form that we shall have to fight without allies? Is it not at least as likely that Russia might some day have France for an ally when she attacks us, as that we should have allies to resist the Russians? It is sufficient, however, to point out that while it is possible that we shall have

allies, it is at least possible that we shall have to fight without them.

The anonymous writer in *Blackwood*,\* and also the late Baker Pasha writing in *Blackwood* in August last, agree with me as to the need for laying down definitely in advance what it is that, in a military sense, we want. They think, as I think, that we ought to make up our minds whether we intend, for example, to defend Turkey and to defend the neutrality of Belgium, and whether we intend to hold Egypt as against France. But even the things which are not matters of choice, the defence of the United Kingdom, of India, of the isolated and smaller colonies, and of the coaling stations, make tremendous calls upon us. There is also the question whether it is possible to defend ourselves against Russia in India if we exclude all idea of counter-attack. Moreover, it being certainly possible that we may one day, unhappily, find ourselves at war with France, there is a further question of the possibility of counter-attack against France, as for example in Tonquin, in Tunis, or in Corsica.

The articles in *Blackwood*, although written by one numbered among Lord Wolseley's warmest friends, are written, as is almost admitted, with strong political bias; and the writer suspects, I hope unjustly, political bias in myself. The author says, and no doubt thinks, that he differs sharply from myself, and his main object in undertaking to write the series of articles appears to be to correct what he believes to be my errors. But what do we find? That he agrees with me upon the main point, that we ought to know exactly what it is that we intend our force to do; that he thinks our

\* Now known to be Colonel Maurice.

present position unsatisfactory, and holds that neither our army nor our fleet is in such a condition as to give us "the men and the ships that are needed for the defence of our commerce and the Empire," while he asserts that "our army is not efficient for war," and admits our "want of readiness for war," and the need of our being, even for the mere defence of the Empire, ready to send out expeditions such as we cannot send out at present. We discover, too, that he agrees with me in wishing to increase the fleet, and to complete and arm the home fortresses and the defences of our coaling stations, and agrees also with me upon many minor points, which extend to the using of the same phrases as I had used. He differs from me chiefly on points of history or of military prophecy, which do not affect the issues on which Englishmen have to make up their minds: for example, as to whether we shall fight for Belgium, on which he quotes Earl Russell, though I can find him still stronger passages to prove that we should defend Denmark, spoken just before we abandoned that interesting country to her fate. He differs from me as to the relative strength of Austria and Russia, and of France and Germany, respecting which I will only remind him that in 1866 it was the all but unanimous belief of English soldiers that Austria would beat Prussia in the Bohemian campaign. In fine let me repeat, in reply to the *Blackwood* writer, that which I have said before as to the unwisdom of those who, thinking our present position unsatisfactory, and more or less agreeing about the main lines of the remedies to be applied, fight among themselves while Lord Randolph Churchill (with whom, oddly enough, in one

sentence he couples me) and his so-called "Economists" reap the benefit of our differences and the nation suffers.

The writer in *Blackwood* thinks that I have exaggerated the real force of Russia. We shall find unfortunately that this is not now the general opinion of well-informed English or foreign officers. The latest books, written both in friendly and unfriendly countries, upon the Russian attack upon India, lay down the proposition that we shall be unable to hold our own. Now, high as I rate the offensive power of the Russian Empire, the view which I put forward in my articles was, for the present moment, a more favourable one, namely, that we should be able to hold our own for some years to come. But, as I have pointed out already, according to the great authorities in India—and no one can deny their competence—I have in several matters rated our power there too high, and the Russian power as against us too low. So far am I from being convinced by the arguments of the *Blackwood* writer that I still fear, not that I have exaggerated the force of Russia, but that I have been in some degree unduly favourable to our own position.

Between the defence of India, and the defence of Turkey or of Belgium, there is this difference, that to the defence of India we are tied, whereas the defence of the other countries rests upon joint treaties, to which there are other parties, and upon consideration of interests as to which there are differences of opinion.

Just as the *Blackwood* writer in proclaiming the necessity of the defence of Belgium only increases, as compared with the Conservative journals which give it up, the burdens

which he would throw upon our army and its present weakness relatively to what is expected of it; so also with the defence of Turkey. I put aside the writer's condemnation of me for not finding any great difference between the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury and that of Lord Rosebery, and approving on the whole of both, with the reflection that Lord Salisbury himself would probably rather share the opinion which I have expressed than that which has been put forward in *Blackwood's Magazine*. Our respective opinions upon this point do not much matter to any but ourselves, and are wholly beside the mark in the present discussion, upon the main bases of which the *Blackwood* writer and myself are agreed. Neither shall I follow him into the mazes of the Danish question of 1864. In 1864 I held the view which he seems now to hold, and my earliest political speeches were made upon that side; but the question has not, in my opinion, any pressing importance at the present time.

The writer thinks that had I known that we could have kept Russia out of Constantinople in 1878 I should have made use of different language in my description of Jingoism and of its swagger. Now my position upon this matter has a certain bearing upon the question of the duties of the British army in time of war, for I consider the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1878 to have been a bit of braggadocio, inasmuch as we were unable then, and are unable now, to defend Asia Minor against Russia. The Convention seems to me to have been a mere pretence that we could defend it, and an attempt to impose upon the Turks and to delude the British public; and I also cannot, being challenged upon the point, deny

that I think that the conduct of the Conservative leaders as to the "Free Port" of Batoum, and other matters at that time, misled the country ; but what does all this matter now ? The points which have a real importance in the present day are not those upon which we differ, but those upon which we are agreed. If it were worth arguing the question, I should have to ask if the belief that we could have kept the Russians out of Constantinople was not the belief of those English generals who in the middle of the Russo-Turkish war thought that the Turks were going to drive the Russians back into the Danube, and who in 1866 had been certain that Austria would conquer Prussia. A more weighty subject of dispute arises where the *Blackwood* writer says that, in comparing the cost of the British army with that of France, I have left out of account the French debt for fortresses and guns. That is so in some degree, and I have also left out of account our smaller debt for fortresses, but our own expenditure upon fortifications has been so small that there is an enormous deal to be spent in England upon this head and upon the head of armament before we shall find ourselves in a satisfactory position, and I see no reason for taking fortresses upon either side into the account. The relative expenditure of the Powers upon their various armies has, however, been exhaustively discussed in the evidence of General Brackenbury before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the War Estimates, and I have no fault to find with the manner in which the question is stated in that evidence.

The *Blackwood* writer laughs at the notion of our being able to pay for keeping up 900 field guns for home defence.

France, which is a less wealthy country, keeps up 138 guns of field and horse artillery (142 if we include an extra mountain battery) at each of 18 out of her 19 corps centres, and these guns are in condition to be put into the field. This is done at no very enormous cost, and 102 guns were actually taken out in an efficient condition by the corps recently mobilized five days after the receipt of the order. The keeping on foot in England even of a far smaller number than the French or German, but of a number much greater than we keep at present, ought not to be attempted unless it is an absolute necessity of our position, but, if it is a necessity, ridicule on account of supposed inability to face the cost is out of place. The matter, however, is one of first-rate importance and must be discussed at some little length. No doubt modern foreign field artillery is less costly than our own, and, except in the quality of the pieces, possibly less efficient, but it is efficient enough to be far better than none at all, and to laugh at the special number of 900 guns is to avoid the point. We are reducing our artillery while in fact it is the force which above all others, in our circumstances, we ought to increase.

A competent military critic, Colonel Knollys, in a recent article upon this subject, has said that at a very low estimate we should need for home defence 450 guns; that we are relying at present entirely upon the artillery of the auxiliary forces, as to which, he says, soldiers feel most uneasy. He pronounces Mr. Stanhope's notions upon the subject "crude in the extreme," points out that no arrangements exist by which the volunteer guns could be horsed by trained



horses, and suggests that Mr. Stanhope absolutely ignores "the value of a mobile field artillery. Can guns of position altogether take the place of field artillery?" In what I have written of volunteer artillery it will be seen that I am far indeed from wishing to ridicule it or to "write it down," and I certainly would keep all of it that I could find, but without the belief that it would be a highly mobile force, and with the conviction that a large proportion of the volunteer artillery would be more useful if placed under scientific officers and considered as garrison artillery. Not only have we been reducing horse artillery lately, but we have also been reducing officers of artillery, and we shall soon find even a greater deficiency than there would in any case have been in trained officers of artillery able to take charge of "the massed guns" of volunteer artillery (supposing it to come into existence) and having experience of the concentration of fire of such massed guns, which is now one of the points of first importance in war.

The reduction of the horse artillery, as compared with ordinary field artillery, is a point too technical for a civilian to write of without much diffidence. Judging from the latest works, that on *Horse Artillery and Cavalry*, by Major Schlieben, and the new or third edition of the *Austrian Cavalry Regulations*, and the books of Captains Servièrè and Durand, in future wars the earlier fighting, which will have an important effect upon the spirit of the troops, will be battles of cavalry and horse artillery against cavalry and horse artillery, for which a highly mobile and numerous horse artillery is needed. This is admitted to be the weakest

point of the modern Continental short-service armies. It ought to be the strong point of our comparatively long-service cavalry and artillery, a cavalry and artillery too in which, it should be remembered, the "rusty" reserve men will bear a far smaller proportion to the other men in the ranks than in the short-service Continental armies. Colonel Von Schell has pointed out that, for this necessary service, the horse artillery must manœuvre with highly trained horses, and that a portion of it must for this purpose be always on a war footing, not trusting to the use of horses purchased, or brought in by the horse conscription, after the declaration of war. Now our horse artillery was, though a costly arm, admittedly a most effective one, and I cannot understand how the best preparation for war consists in reducing your advantage where you possess one.

There has lately been a trial issue of 20-pounder guns to some of the horse artillery. It is difficult to imagine who can be responsible for arming horse artillery with guns of this weight, when any civilian, who has read the latest Continental literature upon the early operations of a war, knows that even greater rapidity on the part of the horse artillery will be required in the future than has been needed in the past. It would almost seem that our horse artillery being superior to that of any other Power in the world, our authorities think it so much too good that they are deliberately trying to reduce it to a position in which it will be able to meet foreign horse artillery upon equal terms. We have indeed an enormous advantage for the creation of horse artillery over the short-service armies. I speak

of "the short-service armies" by contrast with our own, for, though we talk about "short service" among ourselves, foreign writers naturally call ours a long-service army, which as regards service with the colours, as compared with most Continental armies, it now is. It is impossible to produce such splendidly trained troops as our horse artillery without several years of drill. At the same time English horse artillery officers, like English cavalry officers, are a little inclined to underestimate foreign artillery or cavalry, as the case may be, on account of their dingy appearance. In France, and Germany, and Russia, and Italy, every farthing that can be saved is saved, in order to increase the number of men with the colours, and appearance has been wholly sacrificed to numbers. Nothing more dirty, and, in the old sense, unsoldierlike, than the artillery of most of the new Continental armies can be conceived; but there is less difference in the performance than there is in the appearance of the various artilleries. Possibly, on the other hand, the English horse artillery would not have been so hardly dealt with as they have been were it not for their smartness. Officers who belong to other branches of the service are inclined to think that anything so perfectly turned out must be a toy, or intended, at all events, less for use than for show. If their jackets had been as dirty as those of the French horse artillery their numbers might have been increased instead of being diminished. I repeat, however, that our horse artillery force is probably by far the most perfect in the world, that its possession would give us an enormous advantage in the field at the beginning of a war, and that

we ought rather to try to profit by that advantage than to take steps towards throwing it away. The last Continental nation which has made a change in its artillery is Italy, and Italy has enormously increased its horse artillery. Now if there is a Power in Europe which gets the most for its money, as compared with others, it is Italy; and the increase of the Italian horse artillery is in itself, to my mind, a conclusive argument that the recent reduction of our own was a serious error. A French Stanhope, Napoleon III., greatly reduced his guns and artillery horses in 1865, and, although he increased them again in 1866, in 1870 found that he had far too few. With regard to numbers of artillery generally, it may be said, I fear, that the English, who first, at Cressy, used field artillery, are now the hindmost of the Great Powers in the arm which they invented. We think it enough to have ready in England for practical use about the same force of artillery which is kept up at each of eighteen centres by France.

It is singularly unworthy of the dignity of the office of Secretary of State for War that the reduction of the horse artillery should have been justified in a memorandum in which, among the reasons given for the reduction, were the cost of the smart uniform of the force and the extraordinary rapidity of its movements for short distances on parade. A better manner in which to have dealt with any defects that had appeared would have been by an order altering the character, and reducing the cost of the clothing, and by the introduction of a system of drill in which all honour should have been attached to rapidity of movement over longer

distances and more difficult ground. The military witnesses before the Committee of the House of Commons on the War Estimates said that unless smart dress were given to the men throughout the army it would be impossible to secure recruits; but I find that the men themselves do not take this view, although, of course, it may be true and yet denied by the men who are actually serving. Being painfully aware of the trouble which smart dress involves, the men, when once enlisted, prefer plainer clothes. In soldiers' dress great "smartness" is almost incompatible with comfort. As regards the effect of smart dress upon recruiting, it is questionable whether more would not be done for recruiting by improvement of the status of the private soldier than by any conceivable smartness of his dress. Russia and Switzerland have compulsory service; but still it may be worth noting that Russia, which has made more rapid change in military matters than any other Power in the last nine years, has proceeded so far in the direction of the adoption of workmanlike as against smart dress as to try the experiment of abolishing buttons and metal scabbards. The Swiss had already gone far in the same direction; but we may ask, indeed, what, without the clanking sabre, comes of the "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!"

As volunteer field artillery is to be given us for home defence, in place of regular artillery, I suppose that we must make the best of it. The defenders of volunteer field batteries do not, of course, pretend for a moment that they are equal to regular batteries, but they take up that position which may be said to have lately become the official position.

They say that there is a serious danger "that at the moment when an invasion of this country is attempted we may be absolutely denuded of all regular field artillery and have to meet the enemy with a very untrained army of militia and volunteers, who, instead of being able to look for the support of a powerful field artillery to make up for their want of training, would have to face the enemy with hardly a single gun to back them. The vast expense of permanently keeping up a larger field artillery puts that method of getting out of the difficulty out of the question." The defence then of the method which is being adopted assumes, in the first place, the violation of every military principle. It assumes the hopeless poverty of the country, the absolute impossibility of increasing the regular artillery whatever the necessity. In short, the official case begins by assuming that this country cannot afford to have a single gun of regular artillery to put in line against a foreign invader. The reserve of men could do no more than fill up our present royal artillery batteries for foreign service to their war strength. I doubt whether they could replace casualties, and there is no reserve of horses in existence, although it is now intended to try to begin to form one. Mr. Stanhope, by including the dépôt batteries in his calculations, thinks that after providing for the wants of two army corps we should have 14 field batteries left; but he admits that each of these would be changed into an ammunition column. He does not allow, moreover, for the drain of men and horses to enable the batteries of the two corps, which are on a peace footing, to take the field. I think that all artillerymen and indeed all

who have considered the subject will agree that in reality we have no field artillery left for home defence. I should myself go further and deny that we have, or are likely to have, even the men and the horses needed for the batteries of the two army corps.

It has become an axiom with those who have thought about the matter that in the event of an invasion, given the circumstances under which it would take place if attempted at all, the resistance would have to come from the volunteers and those of the militia who were left after Malta and Gibraltar had been filled up by the battalions that volunteered and after other garrisons had been provided, and that the presence of any regular troops to assist the volunteers and the remnant of the militia would be "an accident." Now it is also an axiom that with an army of militia and volunteers, who would probably, too, be armed with an inferior rifle to that carried by our regulars and that borne by the invader, the proportion of artillery ought to be greater than with a regular army, and it is shown to demonstration that whereas we ought to have 900 field guns at least, or, the troops being half-trained and ill-armed troops, even a larger number, we should have as matters stand not a single gun.

The most prominent advocate of the formation of volunteer field batteries on a large scale in order to meet this extraordinary deficiency, which is confessedly the weakest point in our whole system of defence, himself admits that proper volunteer artillery cannot be formed unless the men are paid. What Captain Thompson really asks is that a

militia field artillery should be created, and there is therefore not much difference between him and myself, inasmuch as I am willing to allow that it would not be absolutely necessary in order to face Continental armies, if we had equal numbers, to have also the smartness and the amount of drill which are at present met with in our royal artillery, and that we might hope to create something in the nature of militia field artillery which should be equal in efficiency to the French regular artillery of the present day. When Captain Thompson stated his views before the Royal United Service Institution he was met by a great deal of difference of opinion. Colonel Richardson, an artillery officer of experience and ability, explained how the volunteers, recruited and maintained as at present, could not be expected to keep up a large amount of field artillery; it would be possible here and there, but could not, even by the admission of the author of the system, be done on a large scale without payment of the men, that is to say if the batteries were to be really mobile; and Colonel Richardson pointed out that batteries not mobile would be a mere encumbrance to the defence. The admirable results which were achieved by volunteer field artillery in the past, before its abolition, were explained by another officer, Colonel Ray, who said that his corps used to advertise for retired drivers of the royal artillery, pay them as bandsmen, and clothe them as volunteers when they turned out; all the driving was done by these men, and it astonished royal artillery officers who were not in the secret and who thought that the drivers were volunteers. Obviously this kind of efficiency can only



be obtained in a small number of batteries kept up by wealthy men as a plaything for themselves, and is not to be relied upon for a large force of field artillery. An officer of distinction, General Goodenough, pointed out that it is necessary to be able to move guns rapidly at some periods, although not necessarily for a long time together, and he showed that it was not easy to produce a sufficient amount of mobility in real volunteer artillery. General Brackenbury, in a statement which he made upon the same occasion, explained that the whole of the present militia artillery would be used for the defence of the garrisons, and that a large proportion of the present volunteer artillery must be used for the same purpose. So that it is admitted that we have no artillery for field defence, that we do not possess it even in embryo, and that, after many years during which we were supposed to have made constant preparation against attack, the most important of all points to be provided for has been entirely neglected.

The same brilliant officer, General Brackenbury, who thoroughly knows our needs and might be trusted to provide for them if he were given a freer hand, made last summer at the same place, the Royal United Service Institution, a statement in which he expressed by authority the views of the Intelligence Department upon subjects with which I shall have to deal. He laid down on that occasion, upon many questions, the soundest principles in the most excellent form. He pointed out how our army needed, as it were, to be sorted, and he showed that, while we should have possibly a few regular infantry, and certainly a large

force of militia and volunteer infantry, to put in the field for home defence, we were entirely without field artillery. He calculated that for home defence 390 guns of field artillery would be needed, at the rate of three guns per thousand men, for 130,000 troops. Now I must repeat that for half-trained and ill-armed troops this, which is the old proportion for trained troops, is a sadly low proportion. The rate per thousand men is now nearer four than three in every foreign army. The cheapness of volunteer artillery led General Brackenbury to agree with Lord Wolseley in favour of creating a large force of that description. In the debate which took place in the House of Lords upon this statement by General Brackenbury, Lord Wolseley was quoted as having pointed out the excellence of the American artillery during the Civil War after it had been improvised in less than a year from the civil population. He apparently forgot, however, that the American artillery upon each side had only to meet similar artillery upon the other, and that in the event of an invasion of England it would be the picked artillery of a great foreign army that our volunteers would have to face. It must be remembered too that the steps proposed to be taken are a direct reversal of what has been quite lately done by our own authorities, for the volunteer field artillery which existed before 1873 was abolished in that year.

The confession as to the total absence of artillery for home defence supplies another instructive commentary upon the manner in which Parliament has been hoodwinked in the past. The books which appeared in 1877 on the armies

of all the Powers take carefully from Mr. Gathorne Hardy's "abortive" scheme of eight army corps the figure of ninety guns to each of our eight army corps. Eight times ninety guns makes, according to Cocker, 720 guns; but when the 720 guns are looked for now they are not to be found, and it is admitted that they never had a real existence.

The writer in *Blackwood* accuses me of a misuse of inverted commas with regard to Lord Wolseley's unfortunate term "theatrical." I thought, and still think, that the word "theatrical" appeared to apply, in Lord Wolseley's speech, to the horse artillery. The writer says it did not so apply, and that Lord Wolseley, whose thoughts he knows, was thinking of altogether other matters. I do not know of what matters, and cannot therefore follow the statement. The *Blackwood* writer informs us that Lord Wolseley "deplores" the reduction; but, on the other hand, we know that Lord Wolseley is almost the only officer who defends it.

The writer goes on to make an extraordinary statement with regard to what Mr. Stanhope calls the "abortive scheme" of the eight army corps. This scheme, the writer says, was never intended to do more than expose the weakness of our condition. I have heard indeed that Colonel Home, the author of the scheme, used to say so; but surely the Secretary of State of the time must have taken the matter seriously, and undoubtedly the House of Commons did so. That body could not assume that, when Mr. Gathorne Hardy, who was responsible, assured the House that the very hours in the time-tables had been worked out with a view to the concentration of this formidable list of army corps, the

scheme was not meant as a reality, but only intended to expose the weakness of our position. Moreover, the scheme was allowed to figure as the official "plan of mobilisation" for several years.

The *Blackwood* writer finds one bright spot where nobody else has found one. He seems to think that it is possible for us in some degree to rely upon the native States of India in the event of war with Russia, and to make use of them against that Power, an opinion which will excite a smile at his expense in the case of all Indian officers of experience,\* and which is practically in direct conflict with that expressed by Sir Frederick Roberts and the other members of the Simla Army Commission, who pointed out in their report that the friendship of an Indian prince is no defence against the hostility of his people. Even without treachery, the use of native troops against picked Russians is illustrated by the fate of the 66th Regiment at Maiwand, when panic in two of our own Bombay regiments caused a retreat by British troops before undisciplined Afghans. Thus we read in Biddulph's *Our Western Frontier* that, at the time of Maiwand, "the very stations upon our line of rail were menaced by bodies of marauders, and there was not a single post throughout the whole length of our line of communications which was not threatened or attacked, in many places in localities where the population appeared devoted to us, and it had been years since any sort of disturbance had occurred." Even in spite of the Nizam's recent display of

\* I find that some Indian authorities hope that it may be possible to devise a system under which the native States may safely help.

loyalty the Commander-in-Chief in India would prefer that the 350,000, or some say 390,000, men kept up by the princes should be deprived of every rifle or every cartridge rather than placed in the field upon his side in the event of a war with Russia.

As regards that possible war with Russia which the *Blackwood* writer believes we shall conduct with great allies, but in which I fear that we shall have to undertake unaided the defence of India, he thinks me wrong in mentioning Vladivostock as the point at which our counter-attack should be delivered. I must here say, however, that I have not so much advocated an expedition to Vladivostock as pointed out that it is the only spot at which Russia will be vulnerable by us if we fight alone, and that indeed even there she will only be vulnerable for a few years, until her Siberian railways have been made.

I shall have throughout to mention only Russia and France as probable enemies, because, as I have elsewhere pointed out, Germany has no interests at variance with our own sufficiently important to be likely to lead to a quarrel, and Germany moreover is entirely invulnerable by our forces, after she has been stripped of those shadowy territories in New Guinea and in Africa which it would not break her heart to lose. In the case of Italy there is no reason whatever for apprehending any differences, and if differences did occur our operations would be naval, for it would become the duty of the British fleet to cut off Sardinia and Sicily from the Italian kingdom, difficult though it might be to do this against the Italian first-class

ironclads and torpedo boats, if our fleet had any other calls to meet. With Austria, also, we are unlikely to have quarrels; whereas between ourselves and France differences are frequent, and between ourselves and Russia war is one day almost certain to arise. If, indeed, we are to defend the neutrality of Belgium, we may at any time find ourselves involved in a Continental war against Germany, with France and Belgium for allies; but in my belief the British public are not willing to fight in defence of Belgium. Lord Randolph Churchill, the *Standard*, and the *Morning Post*, form a powerful combination when they throw in their weight with the Peace Society. The defence of Turkey would probably offer us a better field for opposing Russia than, in the course of a few years, any other portion of the world will afford us, but Lord Salisbury during last summer turned a deaf ear to Prince Bismarck's hints. We are, moreover, a peaceful Power, and shall never fight at all until we are driven into war, and therefore I regard it as unlikely that public opinion in England will countenance any scheme for the defence or support of Turkey. The real dangers of military operations on a large scale, which we have to face, are dangers upon the side of Russia and upon the side of France. It is possible that a French ministry not more pro-German than was that of M. Ferry, but taking its policy from Berlin as he took his, might be able to secure the neutrality of Germany in a contest with ourselves. What is more likely to happen, however, is a single-handed war between Russia and Great Britain, with a neutrality unfriendly towards us on the part of France.

In arguing with the writer in *Blackwood*, as in arguing with Colonel Malleon in my former series of articles, I feel that I am carrying on a discussion with one who, generally speaking, looks at matters from the same standpoint as I do myself. It is, however, impossible for those who take part in such discussions to shut their eyes to the fact that there are many who hold that it is possible to greatly reduce our military expenditure by keeping out of Continental complications. This view has become very general in the England of to-day; it is reflected in the provincial newspapers, is supported by colonial opinion, and is apparently on the way towards becoming the average public opinion of our democracy. It is represented even on the Select Committee to which our army expenditure was recently referred, and I see it continually put forward in speeches by men who have a considerable following both in the House of Commons and in the country. I confess that when I read these doctrines in their speeches, I find it somewhat difficult to exactly understand them. I can fully recognize the fact that there may be many who think that, as regards home defence, we may hold our own by trusting entirely to the fleet. I do not share that view. It is possible that, even with an increased expenditure upon the navy, we may find that we cannot permanently retain in the Channel a fleet superior to that which France could concentrate there without much warning. That would certainly be so unless we gave up our present position in the Mediterranean, which, however, I know that many representatives of the democracy would abandon. Upon this point they have

weighty authority upon their side, but then, dealing as I do with facts and not with theories, I must ask them to face the fact that the British public is not likely to consent to abandon the positions of the country in the Mediterranean, except after an unsuccessful war. The late General Gordon was an advocate of retirement from the Mediterranean, and the late Sir Henry Gordon wrote in support of this portion of his brother's policy, and was answered by Sir Samuel Baker and others. Sir Samuel Baker thinks that both routes to India should be looked upon as essential and made secure; he would have us protect the Suez Canal, maintain our footing in Egypt, and hold our own in the Mediterranean, a policy of which I will only say that, however wise it may be if we have the strength to carry it out, its adoption by the country would add to the already tremendous responsibilities of our situation. The present policy would probably in practice lead to the result that, as against France, we should not attempt to hold Egypt in the event of war, but that we should hold it in a war with Russia.

It is not perhaps worth discussing in this place whether we shall or shall not give up Malta, or exchange Gibraltar for a point upon the opposite coast. While the difficulties attending upon the occupation of Egypt are such that England may at any moment cease to occupy that country, it is most unlikely that any arguments will persuade the public to give up Malta, which, whether very useful or not, would undoubtedly be useful under certain circumstances which can be conceived, and is not difficult to hold in time of peace. The chance of our having Italy for an ally in



any future war, and the strength of the Italian fleet, are both of them sufficiently great to make it possible that we should be able to command the Mediterranean against France, even though we had at the same time to defend our coaling stations and our trade throughout the world; and it is certain that so large a number of competent persons will continue in the belief that the command of the Suez Canal is of importance to us that, whatever some Radicals may say, we shall continue to make the attempt to command the Mediterranean and the Canal. On the other hand, it is now known that neither Gibraltar nor Malta is strong enough as it stands, while Cyprus has been left entirely without defence. The case of Gibraltar is indeed so lamentable that I shall have to return to it when I discuss details. It is unfortunately the fact that, while it is possible to arouse the British public with regard to our defenceless condition at any given point, provided one point at a time is named, it has not hitherto been found possible to induce them to consent to the expenditure which is necessary to put all portions of the Empire in a proper condition of defence.

It is shown by General Alderson's evidence before Lord Randolph Churchill's Committee, that the rifle with which our troops are armed will soon be obsolete, and that "the regulars and the navy" will have to be armed at once with a magazine rifle at a cost of nearly a million of money. This will leave the militia and the volunteers, upon whom the defence of the country will fall in time of invasion, armed with an obsolete weapon, to face regular troops armed with a magazine rifle; but to arm the whole of the

forces would cost a million and a half. As has been said by a distinguished ordnance officer in Barrington's *Problem of Invasion*, it is also "impossible to conceive the inconvenience, and possibly the disaster, that might result from the fact that the regulars and auxiliaries carry rifles and carbines requiring different kinds of ammunition." Even the million and a half does not allow for a reserve of rifles; and when Mr. Childers pointed out that fact, General Alderson's reply was, "The least you ought to have is one rifle in store for one in the hands of the troops, and that is less than some foreign Governments have." This means close upon three millions sterling. Then over a million and a half is needed for arming our military ports, that is the southern fortresses, the Channel Islands, Malta, Gibraltar, Halifax, and Bermuda; and a million for defending the commercial ports. Successive Governments have refused to face the expenditure of these five millions and a half, but everyone who has looked into the facts must admit that the expenditure is necessary, and that it is the duty of every patriotic citizen to try to convince his brother electors of this necessity, and cheerfully to bear his own part. It is, however, too probable that we shall go into the next war with our Mediterranean fortresses in nearly the same hopeless condition as regards defence that they are in at the present time, a circumstance which will only add to the already great difficulty of keeping up communication through the Suez Canal.

Let us take the most extreme of all possible views. Let us renounce all concern for Constantinople, all part in Egypt, abandon the Suez route as a route for war, wash our hands

of the fate of Turkey and of Belgium, and declare that if ever we were to quarrel with any Power, we would confine ourselves to defence, nevertheless it is certain that we could not be absolutely sure of always blockading the French in their own ports, except by so hampering our navy as to paralyze it in the task of the defence of our coaling stations, of our trade, and our smaller colonial possessions. Moreover, even if we modify our policy in the way proposed by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, we do not avoid the risk of war with Russia. There are many who advocate also an understanding with Russia, and who believe that Russia covets nothing which we possess. They argue that our position in India is indefensible unless with the full consent of the governed, and that if we possess the full consent of the governed, we need have no fear of a Russian invasion. But India is not one country : it is a vast territory inhabited by great numbers of tribes and peoples in all stages of civilization, some of whom are deeply attached to our rule, some ignorant and indifferent, some hostile, all of whom might easily come to fighting among themselves. Beyond India there lies China, with which we possess a gigantic trade, the disappearance of which would mean a tremendous blow to the prosperity of England. Is it not plain that it is our duty to our own people not to risk our Eastern trade, and our duty to the people of India not to allow the existence of a chance of the invasion of that country and of the anarchy which would ensue ?

It is hardly worth while to discuss the matter as an abstract question upon first principles, when every one must,

I think, admit that the English people will not give up their hold upon India without fighting. No one can have a greater admiration than I have of the spirit and energy of the Russians; but their very patriotism and courage make them dangerous neighbours both to India and to China, and their vast expansive force must cause the risk of conflict with ourselves, however great the pains which both Governments may take to avoid it. It would be impossible even for Mr. Pictou and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, should they ever, by the advance of Radicalism in England, be charged with the administration of our national affairs, to avoid taking upon themselves the duty of making India secure against possible aggression. Even if we shake off Turkey and Belgium and Egypt, and keep as completely free from "Continental complications" as these gentlemen could desire, even if we should trust in a war with France to our navy and our volunteers, yet I fear that we are not in a satisfactory position. This we cannot be until we are certain of being able to defend ourselves in India and to strike a return blow in some portion of the world. Moreover, even upon the most limited view of our duties, we need to back our navy for home defence by such fortresses, such organization of our volunteers, and such support of them by artillery and the other appliances of an organized army, as shall prevent that paralyzing of our maritime forces of which I have already spoken.

Those who do not observe foreign politics with continual attention hardly realize the chances of quarrel in all parts of the world. I gave in my recent view of France a list of

the principal causes of difference between ourselves and that country, but I only included those which were prominent at the moment. Had I gone a few years back I must also have named Paper Blockades upon the China coast, whether by France or by any other country, as a possible cause of war in the future. Had I looked a few years forward I must have seen in the intrigues of France in Siam another very probable cause of quarrel; while in Newfoundland, to which I only referred in passing, we may, at any moment, have to choose between the rising of a colony against ourselves and a war with France. I have indeed perhaps gone too far in the peace direction by assuming that it is only with Russia and France that there is risk of our having, in our time, to fight. Not long ago we yielded to Germany with regard to New Guinea in a manner in which we should not now be allowed by our own colonists to yield—in a manner which has been the destruction of Lord Derby as a politician. We yielded to Germany at Zanzibar, to the permanent loss of our influence in a country where up to that time our influence had been supreme and our trade predominant. I have also not brought into the account the chances of a conflict with the United States.

When we are told that our task would be an easy one if we were to confine ourselves to defence, I would point out that defence involves a good deal of fighting under difficult conditions. I suppose that even Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Picton would fight for the Channel Islands. Those islands are not part of the United Kingdom, it is true, but they are among the oldest possessions of the British

Crown, and I believe the inhabitants consider the United Kingdom a dependency of their own. There certainly are no more devotedly loyal subjects of the Crown. Now it is by no means easy, even with naval superiority in the Channel, to make certain of being able to defend those interesting shores as well as every other point at which we may be attacked.

There is no subject upon which national illusions have such play as upon questions that are half military and half political. Even in the most unlikely quarters we find the most dangerous doctrines promulgated with complacency. One of the "service papers" lately told its readers that we had nothing to fear from Russia because of the condition of her finances. Those who write such articles forget that we have been told the same thing for the last twenty years, although in that period the Russians have doubled their taxation, doubled their national income, doubled their military expenditure, and are more prosperous than they were twenty years ago. Curiously enough, on the very same day on which this article appeared the decision of Russia to at once commence that Trans-Siberian railroad, the completion of which will make her invulnerable by us, was announced to the world. This is probably the most costly undertaking upon which any Power ever entered.

There have lately been warning symptoms upon the side of France to show us that it is possible that France will, with or without a Russian alliance, one day accept the loss of Alsace and direct her attention first to Siam and then to China, in the hope of founding an Indian empire more won-

derful even than our own. There are, too, some in France who think that Alsace itself may one day be recovered through exchange in which England would be the sufferer. An anti-English policy would be popular in France, where with many persons we seem, if the phrase may be permitted, even less liked than are the Germans. A very able pamphlet appeared some time ago in Paris from the pen of a French naval officer under the title of *England in the Mediterranean*, and in that pamphlet the policy of friendship with Germany and of attack upon England was advocated by a patriotic Frenchman. There has lately been published a work to the same effect, which has excited more attention, and which describes the conquest of England by four French army corps, it having been found necessary to mobilize only four out of their nineteen for the purpose of landing 150,000 men, after the diversion of our expeditionary force to Egypt and the division of our fleet. It has been suggested that the last-named work was paid for by German money; but that certainly was not the case with the pamphlet of 1885, and Captain Fiessinger writes calmly and firmly, as though he understood the questions which he is discussing. This French naval officer is of opinion that England can be successfully invaded by the French, and that is the opinion also of many military writers in all countries who have scientifically discussed exactly the same subject. Of two French pamphlets on the state of the English navy, also published, like the two pamphlets on invasion, the one in 1885 and the other in 1887, the former, which was the more precise and the more accurate in its information, attracted but little

notice, while the latter, by M. Weyl, has been a good deal read in England. Both demonstrated what may be called the great potential force of England, but showed also our existing naval weakness when the duties which our fleets would have to perform in war are brought into account. Both the French naval pamphlets demonstrate the superiority of the French naval artillery to our own. These four works are worthy of our attention, and some of their words are far from pleasant reading—as for example the last sentence of the French sea-captain's pamphlet: "To have in the day of danger his place among the defenders of his country is for a German, for a Frenchman, for a Russian, an inalienable right and honour which nothing would induce him to renounce, but for an Englishman to go for a soldier is a weakness. The passion of an Englishman is money: he gives it to procure soldiers, and the union of those soldiers he calls an army, but it is an army to which peace is necessary. Carthage also possessed incalculable wealth and an unrivalled fleet."

Those who think that we may trust for home defence mainly to the volunteers cannot quote upon their side the authority of the volunteers themselves. The volunteers as they stand, according to their best men, as for example Captain Wilkinson, are not able to cope with the regular troops of foreign armies. In a most able article upon the former writings a distinguished volunteer, who is one of the best writers upon volunteering, expressed his adherence to the view "that a great war in which England might be engaged would not end without an attempt at invasion." I may say in passing,



that, although I am willing to adopt the view, I did not give it as my own, but quoted it from the first military writer of the age. Now our volunteer says that this statement is "simply an application to English conditions of what has been for half a century a leading idea of Continental strategists. In any war the first object is to disarm your antagonist. This involves an attack upon his most vital point. No reflection is needed to see that on this principle any enemy at war with Great Britain would take London for his objective. That a landing either on the east or the south coast is practicable every student of military affairs knows, though perhaps not enough Englishmen are familiar with the Continental doctrine that preparation precedes the quarrel, and should, if possible, be complete at the time when war is declared." This representative volunteer insists upon the preparation of a proper defensive army composed of the three arms. He opposes, with vehemence equal to my own, the reduction of the regular artillery, and insists upon increased attention to fortification. He proves indeed that the volunteers of England are not arrogant enough, while well knowing their own value, to differ from the great experts of regular armies in all parts of the world, as to the steps which are necessary to put us in a real position of defence.

"An army to which peace is necessary," says Fiessinger. "An army which has neither peace-footing nor war-footing," says Claser, another foreign writer. These are hardly pleasant phrases; but we have to inquire whether they are true. I need not here reiterate my profound belief in the warlike spirit of the English people, for I have often fully

stated my conviction of its existence, and I shall allow for it throughout the consideration of my present subject. The material, I believe, is excellent; the use made of it is alone bad. It is hardly necessary to prove the existence of reasons for writing on the army at the present time. The inefficiency of our present organization, and its wastefulness, are admitted by persons who differ as greatly the one from the other as, on the one hand, the chief of the "Economists," Lord Randolph Churchill, and, on the other, the soldiers who are the objects of his scorn—Lord Wolseley, Sir Frederick Roberts, and General Brackenbury. Our present position is, therefore, condemned all round, and the day has come when it behoves every Englishman to have an opinion as to the direction in which the remedy is to be sought.

Not that it is a time which, had it been possible to avoid the subject, one would have chosen for a complete revolution in our military system. The present danger of war in Europe is so great that if we had an army of almost any kind we should be inclined, I think, to do the best we could to develop it upon existing lines, rather than cast it into the crucible. But, on the other hand, there is a universal admission of the breakdown of the War Office under the pressure of a centralized administration. It is also conceded upon all sides that we are in a position of utter unreadiness for war, and that the outbreak of hostilities between ourselves and a Great Power would, as matters stand, be the beginning of a period of confusion so intense that it would hardly be capable of increase even were we to be caught by war at a moment when we were undergoing a complete

change of system. We do not, however, in any case, possess the advantage of having even an old efficient system—one merely out of date—actually working or alive among us. If the phrase may be allowed to me, I should say that we have for many years past in this country been in a condition of continual change. We have attempted to introduce short service, and have thus enormously increased the expenditure of India. We have also attempted what we call localization; but we have no true localization and no true system of reserves in a modern Continental sense, for we have no reserves kept in training, and our reserves are mere lists of old soldiers who may be called out. Although we have destroyed our old long-service army of well-seasoned men, we have not adopted short service in the modern sense of the phrase. We have an army very small in numbers, which, by the theory of its organization, should be the most perfect in the world, but it is notoriously behind the armies of the other Great Powers in armament and equipment; and, while its small size and the comparative absence of reserves ought to render it capable of instant mobilization, the possibilities of a British mobilization are, in fact, wholly behind the practice of the Continent, and our army would take far longer to mobilize than would that of any great Continental Power.

When we come to consider the dangers of our present situation and the wastefulness of our existing system, we shall, I fear, find that we are not prepared in time of peace; that the result of our want of preparation would be that we should have to incur frightful and wasteful expen-

diture in time of war ; that our fleet is too weak for its duties, and is at the mercy of the inventors, who are busily at work upon methods of dealing with high explosives which may prove to be its destruction, while we are behindhand in great guns afloat, behindhand in great guns ashore, in disappearing guns, in cupolas and shields, and in submarine mining. We are, I fear, open to invasion, open to bombardment and ransom of our commercial ports, open to bombardment of our arsenals, exposed to the loss of some of our coaling stations, and the consequent destruction of our trade. We are trusting to the navy to do the work both of fortifications and of field armies. We possess no organization for home defence, our reserves of men are not real reserves, we have altogether insufficient field artillery, we possess as yet no reserve of horses ; we could not even mobilize our two expeditionary corps for want of a reserve of horses, and should be unable, therefore, to deliver a counter-attack. I may have to show that the Jubilee review, so far from indicating our possession of two real army corps, proved that we have not one, and that our military position in Europe is growing year by year less strong relatively to that of France and the other Powers. We shall have to take note of the admissions of Mr. Smith and Mr. Stanhope with regard to our deficiency in stores, of the Government admissions as to the stock of rifles and of ammunition, both here and in Canada, which great dependency is indeed, I fear, defensively considered, as badly off as we are in England ; and we may have to remark, in passing, upon the foreign opinion as to the defects in our attack formations, and as to the weakness of our garrison

artillery. If we look to the colonies we shall discover that they can obtain heavy ordnance and ammunition only from England, and that their needs will add to the sudden pressure under which our centralized administration is likely to break down in the event of war. Turning to India, we shall find that the British troops are needed for the garrisons, while the native army is unfitted to face Russians in the field; that, the recommendations of the Indian Commission having been vetoed by Lord Hartington and Lord Kimberley, there is a terrible division of responsibility; and that, while we have deluded ourselves with the belief that we have come, in Afghanistan, to a settlement with Russia, which is in fact no settlement at all, we are losing ground year by year relatively to Russia, who is steadily increasing her power of attack. As regards finance, we shall find that just as English defence has been sacrificed to Indian, India leaving us mere depôts for home service, so India is being ruined by the monetary calls made upon her by a system which is unsuited to her requirements. India needing long service, and England needing short service and large reserves, a compromise has been arrived at which suits neither.

With the waste and muddle that exist at home we shall have to compare the scientific system of modern Continental armies, and to see how far their organization is a model to ourselves. We shall have then to consider the Swiss, Canadian, and American systems of defence, and to examine whether I am right in thinking that what would best suit England would be a purely English system based

on English and Indian requirements, rather than a copy of the organization of any Continental Power.

The system on which the English army of the future is to be based is the subject of continual Parliamentary inquiry, conducted by innumerable Committees and Commissions. Of the armies of the other European Powers, that of Russia is wholly free from Parliamentary interference, and those of Germany and Austria practically free from it; and the Italian Parliament, whatever may be the condition of the Italian finances, from year to year has granted everything for which it has been asked by the last two distinguished Ministers of War, cheerfully assenting to the doubling of the artillery, and to the increase of the numbers and improvement of the equipment of the other arms. While the Italian artillery has been actually increased during 1887 by forty-eight batteries of six guns each, the German artillery is also undergoing increase. In France Parliament retains a strict control over the details of military organization, but this does not prevent the entrusting of a great amount of power to the most competent men who can be found. The Superior Council of War a few months ago was composed of eleven members, of whom nine would be generally admitted by soldiers to be the nine best officers in the French army, namely, the Minister of War and the Chief of the Staff, with Generals Saussier, Février, Billot, de Miribel, Lewal, Wolff, and de Galliffet: the other two are Generals Carrey de Bellemare and Bressonet. Of the two last-named, who are less known in England than the others, the former commanded at Le Bourget, commanded the centre at the battle of Buzen-

val, and afterwards commanded the division of Nice and then two army corps successively; the latter is a distinguished engineer general, who has long been President of the Committee of Fortifications. With this state of things we have to contrast that which prevails in this country, where we are in the hands of the Duke of Cambridge and Lord Wolseley, whose ideas notoriously do not agree; whereas Sir Frederick Roberts, who differs on many points from both, gets none of his own way in England, and not much of it in that India which he thoroughly understands and in which he nominally holds supreme command.

With the disorder which exists among ourselves we shall have to contrast the order which exists abroad. Next in size to the enormous, and perhaps unwieldy, army of Russia come those armies of France and Germany, which we may take as the modern type. In each we find a peace footing of between five and six hundred thousand men, with between sixty and seventy thousand cavalry, and between sixty and seventy thousand artillery. Each army possesses about nineteen army corps in time of peace, each corps having a strength of artillery greater than that which our generals assign to an army corps in time of war. It is with great difficulty that England could at this moment put in line in India two army corps, and in England one army corps—that is in all three army corps—equal to any three of eighteen of each of the Powers which I have named. Even this could only be done by either neglecting Indian garrisons which have been pronounced to be essential by Sir Frederick Roberts, or by padding our Indian corps

with native troops of doubtful efficiency in the field. The French and German armies can be doubled in a week by bringing in the reserves, and can be quadrupled in three weeks, so far as the number of men goes, although not without a diminution of the efficiency of the regiments. Everything in France and Germany is kept in so high a state of preparation for immediate war that the whole of the waggons for the train of each army corps are stored at each of about eighteen centres (or in the case of France in groups of centres) in enormous sheds, and every article that can be needed is always ready. This minuteness of preparation is well understood by men like Lord Wolseley and Sir Frederick Roberts, and by all the officers of our own Intelligence Department; but they have become so used, by long suffering, to the English habit of cutting down stores in time of peace, that they are inclined to trust to the corresponding English habit of lavish expenditure in time of war to provide for all such matters. At the same time, however, in the event of war, with say France, for example, the existence of all these stores at a great number of centres, some of which are upon the very shores of the English Channel, and their non-existence in our case, would give a great advantage to our enemy. The elementary maxims upon which Continental armies work are, of course, well understood by many English soldiers, but they need to be repeated in this country, because, although known and understood, they are not acted upon among ourselves; for example, the simplest and most necessary of all, that each man should know the place which will be his in



time of war, and the duties that he will be called upon to perform.

We are not without men who could reduce our non-system to system, and who could apply for us these well-known maxims. Sir F. Roberts, who has partly done this in India so far as the white army goes, and has attempted, in spite of resistance at home, to reform the native force—Sir F. Roberts could do it. Lord Wolseley, whose organization of each of his expeditions has been careful, energetic, and in every way remarkable, and who, in his *Soldier's Pocket Book*, has produced the best of all handbooks to the elements of the art of war—Lord Wolseley could do it. But the existing system does not do it, although the talents of these men have forced them to the very front in spite of a system the weakness of which they know.

It is impossible to wonder that soldiers, perplexed by foolish questions, should be inclined to insist that they should in the first place be told what it is that we wish them to do. It would be arrogant, however, in an individual to attempt to authoritatively decide what are the military needs of the country, but there is a kind of minimum of military needs which may be easily ascertained by careful inquiry without attempting to settle questions which cannot be settled except by Parliament. While it is impossible for me to decide whether we are to fight for Belgium or for Turkey, it is certain that, even if we are to do so, we must also be prepared to defend ourselves in the United Kingdom and in India. The minimum of our requirements must be the power, as against Russia, to defend India and to deliver

a counter-attack ; the power, as against France, to defend the coaling stations from attack, and in addition, the possession at home not only of the power to defeat invasion, but also of sufficiently obvious means of repelling invasion to prevent panic. We are exposed to the possibilities of invasion, but it is even more to panic than to invasion that we are open, and panic may be almost as disastrous to the Empire as invasion. For example, suppose that, in the case of a war with France, the French should mobilize a large force in Northern France and concentrate that force at Brest or some Channel port, and should there prepare a flotilla like the Boulogne flotilla of the first Napoleon. Even though our navy were confident of its power to protect us against a rush, yet, unless our land defences should be far more effective than they are at present, such a panic would arise in London as to force a concentration in the Channel of all our fleets, leaving our Mediterranean interests, and what is more grave, those coaling stations throughout the world which are the protection of our trade, at the mercy of a French attack.

There are few naval officers who will be of opinion that our navy is strong enough to shut in the fleets of all probable enemies and, in face of new inventions, to certainly maintain the command of the seas in time of war. There is not one who will not tell you that, in order to do this, the navy must be set free for its own work, and that its ports and coaling stations must be defended for it. As matters stand the great commercial ports are almost wholly without defence, and in the case of the coaling stations we have not yet fully provided the guns we have promised to provide.

Many naval officers, foreseeing that the navy will be expected to defend London in the event of war with France, wish that London should be fortified at an expenditure of several millions, and there are hardly any naval men who are not of opinion that either this, or some increased defence at the coast or near the coast, is necessary. Looking to the enormous interests involved, I should myself have thought that the expenditure of between three and five millions on the fortification of positions round London would be an expenditure that, taken in connection with a real organization of our forces, would distinctly "pay." It would steady us against panic in time of war, because it would obviously deprive the enemy of the chance of suddenly bringing the war to a close by a rush on London if he obtained the temporary command of the Channel. To do this would be to make invasion under such circumstances a game not worth the playing. When we consider the frightful consequences that an occupation of London would have, it seems to me that the insurance asked of us is not excessive. The volunteers, who could not, without a very different organization from that which at present exists, be trusted to meet an equal force of foreign regulars in the field, would do splendid service in the defence of even partially fortified positions. This subject is often misunderstood: of course a half-fortified London could not stand a siege, although, on the other hand, if really fortified, London could not be invested. But what we want is to gain time in the event of an invasion, and if we could so fortify the capital, and so divide and protect our arsenals and factories, as to prevent the chances of the enemy destroying

us by a sudden rush, we should gain all that was needed to allow free play to the enormous defensive strength of England. There are some naval officers, like Admiral Fremantle, who are opposed to the fortification of London, but, like those who would fortify it, they admit that our defensive position at home is altogether bad, only the money that some would spend in fortification they would expend upon the proper organization of our troops. If there were the smallest risk that the throwing up of fortifications for the defence of London would make us think that we were sufficiently defended without a proper field artillery, without the arming of our defensive force with the best weapons, and without a thorough reorganization of our military system, then I for one would join with Admiral Fremantle and the other opponents of metropolitan fortification, for there can be no doubt that the organization of the defensive forces should stand first. Yet it is worth remembering that France, which possessed in 1870 as fine an army as the world has ever seen, but of insufficient numbers, might have been saved had she spent before 1870 in fortification half the sum which she has devoted to fortification since that date. Even if London is not to be defended, Woolwich at least should be prepared against sudden attack, and that second arsenal, in the centre of England, begun, the construction of which has been again and again decided upon and then abandoned.

I have spoken of the insurance involved in spending four or five millions upon the fortification of London. It has been calculated that the property in London is worth more

than one thousand million pounds, so that it will be seen that neither the money needed for field artillery, nor that needed for repeating rifles and for fortification, if the measures recommended should be adopted, would amount to a large percentage upon even the money that is involved. But the capture of the capital means a great deal more than the jeopardy of a thousand million pounds, for it involves the downfall of the Empire as a whole and the complete destruction of our trade.

There are some who are fond of meeting definite proof of existing weakness by vague and general talk about the strength of the British Empire as compared with the strength of France and the other Powers, and who direct attention to our enormous territory, to the vast numbers of our subjects, to the rapid growth of the American and Australian colonies, and then ask what are France and Germany by our side; but on the other hand, of what use is it to possess an enormous empire, if the heart of the Empire lies open to attack? In some sense the extent of the Empire is a weakness to that heart. British North America, without conferring upon us any resisting force for home defence, may make heavy and sudden calls upon us for assistance. Much complacent exultation has been shown of late in Parliament as to the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Now the railway across the American continent on British territory might be very valuable to us in the event of operations in the North Pacific, but, nevertheless, it cannot be considered generally valuable in a military sense without heavy deductions being made. Not only does it lie close to the territory of a possible enemy, but, even supposing the

friendliness of the Government of the United States, there are points between Halifax and the upper provinces where a few anti-English raiders from the State of Maine might easily destroy the line; and there are several other places where the blowing-up of bridges would be possible, and most difficult to prevent by any care. This is only one example out of a hundred that might be given of the great distinction which exists between our possible or eventual strength and our actual weakness and unpreparedness at the moment.

To state, sufficiently for the purposes of this introduction, the question which we shall have to discuss, I must repeat that it is necessary, before general reorganization is attempted, that we should to some extent bear in mind exactly what our army will have to do; that it is impossible to fully lay down in advance propositions upon this subject; that I have not gone into any question of what I should myself wish, and that it would be ridiculous for me to do so, but that I have tried to gauge public opinion upon such points as the defence of Belgium and the defence of Turkey. Then I have shown that while these questions cannot be wholly decided in advance, there is a minimum for which we must be prepared. This minimum has, too, to some extent, been already settled for us. Parliament has for some time past allowed successive War Ministers to assume that we ought to defend the coaling stations, to be in a position to defend ourselves in India and at home, and to send, if need were, two army corps abroad as an expeditionary force. It is upon this basis, which I find as it were laid down for us, that I shall try to build.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PRESENT POSITION.

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HAVING considered what it is that in a military sense we want, we have now to see whether we are in possession of that which we find we need. In other words, to use popular phrases, after discussing "what we want," I have to ask the question, "Have we got it?" I purpose to put forward in some detail the waste and the weakness of our present system before I come to that consideration of the remedies which may be expressed by the phrase "How to get it."

Some doubt has indeed been thrown upon the accuracy of my statement of the first portion of the problem. An elaborate article in the *Edinburgh Review* has challenged almost the whole of the positions that I took up. The writer—ignoring the statement with which I set out in my former series of articles, that I was going to deal with the facts of the situation and not with hopes or wishes, and disregarding also the expression of my own feelings with regard to that situation which is to be found in the latter part of the chapter on Great Britain\*—attacks me for

\* *The Present Position of European Politics*, pp. 363, 364. Chapman and Hall, 1887.

“failing to make any indignant protest against the pernicious doctrine that might makes right,” a protest I undoubtedly made in the strongest terms. He, however, goes on to admit that I am right in stating that sheer force holds a larger place in the present position of the European world than it has held in modern times since the fall of Napoleon. He then argues that a general war is unlikely at the present moment (a view in which I entirely concur), traverses my statements with regard to the military power of Russia, shows his ignorance of the military condition of the Continent by a calm assumption that France has no fortresses equal to those of Rastadt and Ulm, and makes the further assumption that I do not myself desire that Belgian neutrality should be defended by this country, which is entirely opposed to the views I have for many years consistently expressed. The writer of the *Edinburgh* article appears unable to understand that one’s own wishes and one’s view of the possibilities and probabilities of the future may not agree; and although I think it in the highest degree unlikely—on account of signs and portents to which I fully alluded, such as the defection of several of the Conservative leaders and of almost the whole of the Conservative press—that we shall defend Belgium, I myself should be glad to see the contrary view prevail, for I agree with the *Edinburgh* reviewer that a distinct declaration of our intention to protect Belgium would make it unnecessary that we should ever send a man to do so. The writer has apparently not moved forward since the times of the Peninsular War. He thinks that it is as certain that the people of this country would



fight for Belgium now as that they fought for Portugal under treaties of even older date. All I can say is that he appears to have shut his eyes to everything that has been going on in England in the last ten years. Coming to matters which most closely concern my present subject, the writer in the *Edinburgh Review* professes to be acquainted with the Russian plan of campaign at the time of the Penjdeh affair, and states that it contemplated the advance only of forces wholly disproportionate to the attempt to threaten our Indian frontier. Now not this writer only, but the whole world, is fully acquainted with the nature of the attack which was to have been made in the direction of India some years ago; but what neither the *Edinburgh* reviewer nor anyone else is in a position to state is the force which will be moved towards India by Russia when she next contemplates attack. I have over and over again stated that Russia is not yet in a position to reach India; and so well is she aware of the fact that, were war to break out between Russia and England at this moment, while she would keep all our troops in India, and even, by stirring up disaffection in the country and by moving troops towards it, force us to despatch reinforcements thither, she would only threaten and not seriously attack; and it is for this reason that we have yet time, if we choose to open our eyes, to make those changes in our army which will enable us to defend ourselves against the Russians. But what I confidently maintain against the *Edinburgh* reviewer, and what is known to be the opinion of those concerned in the government of India, who are far more able than I am, or than he is, to judge of the

defensive position of that country, is that Russia is pressing on the completion of her Central Asian railroads with extraordinary haste for purely military reasons, and that as they become completed she will be in a position not only to threaten but to attack. The *Edinburgh* writer then goes on to admit that war between England and France is possible at any time, but he concludes his survey of the reasons which make it possible by deprecating it "on every ground of policy, humanity, and interest." Surely the *Edinburgh* reviewer might have spared us these mild protests. No one will do him the injustice to suppose that he desires, or indeed could do otherwise than abhor the prospect of, war with France; but unfortunately, while this is the general feeling of good men, wars do arise from time to time, and fleets and armies are kept up at enormous cost to insure us against their dangers, and it is merely childish to put aside admitted possibilities with language of this kind. The writer concludes his article by assuming that this country is in a perfect position of defence because, as he shows, the numbers of our troops are very great; but he adds the guarding phrase, "provided these forces have that high degree of efficiency and equipment which they ought to possess." If we use these words of his in the widest sense, to include organization in every form, I agree with him; the whole point is there; but feeling confident, as I do, that the army as at present organized is incapable of performing those tasks which it may at any moment be called upon to discharge, it would be criminal in me not to say so.

The key to the complacency of the *Edinburgh* reviewer is to be found in his confident hope that we shall join the alliance of the Central Powers. When I stated that, after the rejection of the ratification of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, Germany pressed England to take a more active part in Eastern matters, promising Austrian and Italian support, "and that Lord Salisbury, perhaps rightly, refused," a contradiction came from Berlin to the effect that the statement was not accurate, because, although Prince Bismarck "was privately of opinion that England in her own interest should pursue a more active policy of initiative in the East," he had not "pressed" her nor promised the support of Austria and Italy. If Prince Bismarck's opinion had been "private" the probability is that it would not have reached the present writer. It is because it was freely expressed by Prince Bismarck to all who chose to listen that it came to be the common property of the principal ambassadors of the Central Powers in the chief capitals of Europe. As to "pressing," I do not know what is more like pressing than what occurred. As to his promising the support of Austria and Italy, I may no doubt have been mistaken, and have assumed that when the ambassadors of Italy held exactly similar language to that held by the ambassadors of Germany and by Prince Bismarck, it was not a mere chance that caused the identity of the language. The fact remains that the most authorized exponents of the policy of the Central Powers have for some months past been saying to this country, "We want you to be completely with us, because at the present moment you reap the advantage of

the alliance of the Central Powers which keeps France and Russia quiet and saves Turkey, but you give nothing in return. We do not ask you for a single soldier, we have sufficient military force to keep the peace; but we ask you for the British fleet in certain eventualities to prevent the destruction of the fleet of Italy by the fleet of France." England's position in the alliance of the Central Powers remains open for her, and she might secure the advantages of the partnership by committing herself to the alliance in this limited form. I know that Lord Salisbury has gone a certain direction in the way of compliance with the wishes of the Central Powers; but he has not gone the whole way, and "perhaps rightly" has refused to do so. The *Edinburgh* reviewer will think him wrong, but it is doubtful if Parliament with its composite majority would support Lord Salisbury in a course which might be made to look as though it were the guaranteeing to Germany of Alsace-Lorraine, a district still held by force and desiring to be French. The *status quo* in the Mediterranean may pass muster where the *status quo* on the Rhine would upset an administration.

If I were inclined to go into the digression it would be amusing to compare the views of the *Edinburgh* reviewer with those which an *Edinburgh* reviewer, shown by internal evidence of the articles to be the same, held in 1866. Twenty-one years ago, as has been pointed out by an able writer in the press, he thought that Prussia had "deified force and fraud." He now finds in that Power our safe and just ally, and he uses with regard to France language as

little flattering as that which he used of her rival then. But I confine myself to dealing with those points in the article which have to do with my present subject—the British Army.

As it has been decided, upon a full view of the whole position, not to trust the protection of the interests of the country to the fleet only, and to a strict alliance with the Central Powers, it remains necessary for us to see that we have under certain circumstances the strength to protect ourselves, and my doubts as to the existence of that power under our present organization have been touched upon in the introductory chapter. Some of my critics, while admitting the truth of the views put forward, ask why they were not expressed before. I have not previously had the leisure to complete my necessary knowledge of detail in order to enable me to state the conditions of the problem at length, but I have on various occasions spoken upon the subject and made suggestions for reform. In coming to the consideration in detail of the degree in which our preparations equal or fall short of our needs I am very naturally called upon to make good the somewhat alarming statements which I have been driven to place before the public through the conviction that it is only by publicity we can ensure the application in time of remedies which will be sufficient. There is one great difficulty about proof, which is that while soldiers are very willing to communicate information in their possession as to our present weakness to those who they think may help in any degree to set things straight, they not unnaturally shrink from the publication of their

names, and the greater portion of the best men, being on active service, are forbidden themselves to write for the press. One form of proof of my statements is available to all my readers: let them take those portions of any disclosures which I may make as to which they have the most doubt, and let them ask the best military authorities that they can find among their acquaintance to inform them fully but verbally upon the point. I think that the amount of examination which even a civilian is able to make will convince him that I have not been guilty of exaggeration.

It is not, be it remembered, the unsuccessful soldiers from whom proceeds that widespread grumbling as to our present position which undoubtedly exists among military observers. The men who are high up, and who have attained to positions so pre-eminent that they have little to look forward to in the way of possible promotions, take every opportunity which the rules of the service allow of making it clear that they think us in an unsatisfactory position. There is indeed a certain conflict among them. Some adopt the Home point of view, which is most familiar to them, and others the Indian; and I shall attempt throughout to consider the questions which arise from a general or Imperial point of view, neither specially Home nor specially Indian. Some of my critics have assumed that we should be in a satisfactory position if we possessed ample power to ward off by direct resistance the blows which might be aimed against ourselves either in England or in India, and they appear to think that I desire to go further and to advocate the creation of an army

capable of taking part in Continental operations on a large scale—such an army as would involve us in the necessity for a conscription. Let me at once say with regard to conscription that, while I have no personal objection to it, and would gladly have served myself or have seen my son compelled to serve, I have never varied the language which I have used with regard to its impossibility. There can be no doubt that the majority of the people in this country prefer to pay the extra millions which the absence of a conscription costs, and I shall have to show that they are so far right that this country can find sufficient men, without conscription, for all her needs. On the other hand I cannot agree with those who think that there can be adequate defence without the power to strike a return blow of any kind. I have tried to show that even setting aside the doubtful questions, such as those of the defence of Turkey or the defence of Belgium, we cannot be looked upon as being in a safe position for defence as regards our Indian Empire, if we are merely to resist attack upon the Indian frontier. I shall have to quote in the course of this chapter the opinions as to our present position both of Lord Wolseley and of Sir Frederick Roberts; and if such men are as convinced as their words show them to be of the inadequacy of the results obtained as compared with the money which we expend, I think that this admission alone makes a sufficient case for commencing the inquiry upon which I entered in the last chapter.

There is in England a Treasury notion of what the relation of the State to the army should be in peace and war. This Treasury notion is shared by English politicians who differ

as widely the one from the other as some old-fashioned Liberals and Lord Randolph Churchill. Those imbued with the Treasury notion think that in time of peace we should ruthlessly cut down the Estimates, and, putting our backs against the wall, resist "the services," but that in war we should "give our generals their head." As the older men often phrase it, "in war the Treasury is silent." We are, in short, more saving of peace taxes than of war debt, and though as individuals we should be more careful how we spend when we are incurring debt than when we are meeting our liabilities out of income, as a nation our practice is the reverse. If the arrangement for strict saving in time of peace and for wild waste in time of war was ever a wise one, which in my opinion it was not, even in the days of old-fashioned armies, it is certainly foolish in these times of rapid mobilization. A sudden heat might easily arise between, say for example, France and ourselves, and we might be overwhelmed before we had time even to squander our gold. We are in these times, indeed, exposed to war at a day's notice, and to invasion at very short notice, if our fleet can be divided, or drawn away and beaten in detail. We are open to a rush by portions of a peace army of half a million of men, and the fear of this danger would paralyze our defence in all portions of the world, and cause the destruction of our trade by the concentration, in panic, of our whole navy in the British Channel.

We must remember too that, when we ridicule the possibility of invasion on account of our confidence in our fleet, we are going upon the uncommercial principle—



which ought certainly to be rejected by a commercial nation—of putting all our eggs into one basket. Our fleet, for example, is at the mercy of a new invention, and it is no dream to suppose that a gun or other engine of destruction may be suddenly developed, and even secretly developed, to such a pitch of perfection as to lead to the destruction of the fleet against which it is employed, on the very first occasion on which it is seen at sea. We know, for instance, that both France and Germany have lately manufactured great quantities of shells filled with what are termed “high explosives.” We hear that these shells are probably too dangerous for use in large guns at sea if those guns are fired by powder; but the Americans and the Italians are carrying on experiments with shells filled with “explosive gelatine” fired from smooth-bore guns not charged with powder, and it is at least conceivable that such a gun as this may be adopted by one Power before any other Power possesses it, and may cause the total destruction of a fleet. I am not concerned, however, with the success or failure of any one invention; but it is a conceivable contingency that some one invention or another may at any moment make obsolete our whole fleet.

It is, by the way, a singular fact that not only is this experiment of which I have spoken being tried by the Italians, but that, generally speaking, with their comparatively small expenditure, they should be able to try experiments which we cannot afford, and should be superior to us at the present moment both in the power of their artillery and in the resisting strength of their shields.

Spezia is being armed with 120-ton guns, and the turrets which contain them successfully resist blows at short range from the projectiles of the 100-ton gun.

We are very apt in England to leave the trial of experiments to other Powers, on the ground that our insular position relieves us from pressing danger; but the amount of leeway that would in time of war have to be made up in haste is consequently very great. Take artillery defence, for example. We cannot decide as between the Moncrieff system and other plans; whether our guns should disappear into pits or whether they should stand up in cupolas protected by iron plates; what system of disappearing carriage is to be used if the former system is adopted, and so forth. Such questions are continually debated and never finally decided, but in the meantime, as compared with Italy, and even as compared with France, we fall into the rear. Gibraltar and Plymouth are open to bombardment; Portsmouth is weak by land and sea. Our commercial harbours are not secure, our distant coaling stations are not yet adequately defended. We do not compare favourably as regards guns with Italy and France. If we look to the largest size, France has as many and Italy more than we. If we take all guns of over 20 tons, but exclude obsolete muzzle-loaders, the French have a vast superiority over us in numbers and the Italians in calibre. We are very far short also, as compared with other Powers, of harbour defence torpedo boats, and a discussion which took place not long ago on submarine mining shows that in that respect, as in many others, we are trusting to the

navy to do work that a marine is not really competent to perform.

An excellent pamphlet on *Volunteer Artillery*, published by the Manchester Tactical Society, after stating with great force the steps necessary to be taken to prepare for the defence of a fortress, asks how far either political party has prepared our fortresses for defence. I can reply that during the last war scare it was found at Portsmouth how great were the deficiencies there, but that those deficiencies have not yet been fully met; while such is the condition of Gibraltar that were a hostile cruiser to bombard it, there are only four guns which could reply, namely two old muzzle-loaders, and two 100-ton guns mounted at the time of the last scare. As what I have said of volunteer field artillery has been criticized, I may note in passing that in this essay, written by a volunteer for volunteers, it has been excellently pointed out how much is needed for field artillery, and the conclusion drawn by an association of representative volunteers is: "Training and experience, such as we have described, the volunteer cannot get under any circumstances we can at present conceive."

Recent writings show that competent English critics fully accept the view of the possibility of invasion which has been freely expressed by foreign writers. It is admitted that our navy is not in a position, and is not likely soon to be in a position, as compared with the navies of other Powers, to guard our very long and weak lines of sea communication, to protect our smaller colonies, and also to close every possible avenue of approach to the United Kingdom; and that while

the navy may make invasion very difficult, it is not able to render it impossible. France could concentrate without much difficulty a great number of large steamships capable of carrying sufficient infantry across the Channel without long preparation, and could also provide transport capable of carrying smaller forces of artillery and even of cavalry, although, no doubt, the disembarkation of cavalry and artillery, unless long practised, would present difficulties hardly faced by our writers on invasion. The militia and volunteers would give us a large force of infantry to stand in line in face of such an invasion; that force is, however, at the present time without proper organization or equipment, and without a due proportion of artillery, cavalry, engineers, commissariat, and transport. The disembarkation of an invading force, if we had temporarily lost the command of the Channel, would no doubt be a matter of time, although the inquiries of Admiral Mends have shown it to be perfectly practicable; but some of our fortresses are so ill defended that it is within the limits of possibility that they might be seized by a rush and held against ourselves to cover the disembarkation. It has been proved how completely the existing organization, such as it is, of the militia and volunteers is an organization for peace and not for war, and how unprovided our forces are with regular artillery for home defence.

The position of the Mersey, Tyne, Clyde, and Firth of Forth, is an illustration of present danger of another kind. Lord Carnarvon has dealt with the first three cases; and as regards the last, which involves the fate of Edinburgh and

Leith, there are, I believe, only four guns at present protecting that position, which would almost appear to have been specially designed by nature to invite attack. The weakness of other points was exposed in the course of the operations which followed the Naval Review at Portsmouth; and it must be remembered that our best coast defence force, the coastguard, would disappear in case of war, the men being taken for service in the navy. A distinguished French admiral asked some years ago of his own country, "Is one to paralyze a flotilla of cruisers to protect the ports?" From such inquiries has come, in France, a constant increase of the expenditure on fortification, both from military and from naval votes, for there is in France a large coast-defence expenditure borne on the naval estimates. But in England we seem to think that our fleet may safely be left to defend our shores from invasion, our commercial ports from ransom, and our trade from capture.

I have given to this book the title of the British Army, although I shall have frequently to deal with the position of the whole of our defences, and to include the navy in my survey. I have done so because I have definite suggestions to make in my later chapters with regard to military organization, which is not the case with regard to our marine. There is in military matters some chance of arriving at scientific truth by the comparison of skilled opinion, and there is no such chance in the case of the navy until war has decided many questions for us. It is impossible to prove to the satisfaction of others, if indeed one can prove to one's own satisfaction, what is the best class of ship. It

may safely be asserted that this country cannot, with wisdom, allow herself to be surpassed by France in any class. Moreover, the duties which will fall to our fleet in time of war are far more varied and far more weighty than those which will be the lot of the marine of any other Power. I heard with alarm of the intention of our Admiralty to build no more great ironclads. It is easy to write off the Italian superiority in monster ships, and to declare that Italy is certain to be in alliance with ourselves. There are no certainties when the existence of our country is at stake. What is to prove to us, moreover, that there is no risk, in the event of a general war, of the cession of the Italian ironclads to another Power, and of their ultimate use against ourselves, even though Italy were friendly? The French have splendid dockyards for executing repairs, and an enormous reserve of trained seamen to navigate and "fight" the foreign ships that they might capture or obtain as the result of fortunate operations upon land. Another fact about the fleet which is capable of scientific proof is the wickedness of throwing upon our sailors the defence of fortresses that have been imperfectly armed. At Gibraltar, when the possibility of bombardment by hostile ships is pointed out to our army officers, they are obliged to answer, "Well, we must expect our fleet to command the seas." But so it is in all parts of the world, and our squadrons are counted upon to be present in every quarter of the globe, and superior in strength to the enemy everywhere. If this view of the duties of the fleet is to prevail, then our naval forces should be three or four times as strong as they are at present; but it would, in my opinion,

be safer and more economical to use fortifications and soldiers where their use is commanded by the ordinary rules of war, and to throw upon our fleet those duties only which are properly the duties of a navy.

Several critics who agree generally with my positions have thrown doubt upon the wisdom of a suggestion of mine for the "fortification of London." I have perhaps not expressed my meaning with sufficient clearness, but if they will turn back to what I have said upon the matter, they will see that my intention was to advocate, not the regular conversion of London into a fortress that would stand a siege, but the protection of the principal positions surrounding the metropolis with such works as would greatly aid the volunteers in meeting "a rush." I have several times stated that the knowledge that London is completely open is very tempting knowledge to foreign officers of enterprise, and that the partial protection of London by the erection of simple works upon well-chosen positions would make a great difference in the chance of an invasion.

I have already, in my introductory chapter, pointed to the deficiencies of our system of home defence on shore, and these defects are almost universally admitted. I have said that we have no artillery to place in line; and I have proved that though we possess at home thirty-eight field batteries, they would, on the outbreak of war, instead of being increased, be decreased by more than a third, and would become only twenty-four batteries for the field. Each of our two army corps for foreign service would possess then little more than half the number of guns which belong to each foreign

corps, and not one single gun would be left to us at home. No answer is made or can be made to this statement, and so it is with many others in succession. The only attempts that have been made to meet the general condemnation which has been pronounced upon our military system consist in the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, and in Mr. Stanhope's expressed determination to build up a master for himself in the shape of a small Military Board. But the real fight over War Estimates is in the Cabinet, and if Mr. Stanhope, as Secretary of State for War, had to deal with Lord Randolph Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I do not think that the former would find himself much strengthened for the internal struggle by being able officially to state that he had Lord Wolseley and the Duke of Cambridge at his back.

It may safely be said that unless we prepare our defence army in time of peace we shall never be able to organize it in time of war. As has been excellently declared by Major Adts, "The great secret of armies for obtaining success in war is that they should have been given an incontestable superiority in time of peace." That is the principle upon which Prussia went when in the course of a fifty years' peace she made her army the first army in the world, cheaply, without imitation of other countries, and on a truly national system of her own invention. If we wait for war we may wait too long. The principles laid down in France under the Restoration, by some of the best generals of the First Empire, who were then serving under the new Government on the Council of War, are for all time. They consisted in



the declaration of the need of preparation in time of peace, in the first place of stores (what, alas, had our stores become under Treasury control a year or two ago!); in the second place of artillery, cavalry, engineers, commissariat, and transport, to be fully trained and always ready for war; and in the third place of infantry regimental cadres to be easily and quickly filled up. It is true at all times and in all countries that the organization for war and the special arms should be always ready, and that it is impossible as regards these to rely upon sudden preparation, or upon the services of untrained and half-trained men and of horses which have to be bought up just before, or just after, the declaration of war. At the same time, the great masters of the art of war of whom I speak never failed to declare that it was essential that the organization of corps, divisions, and brigades, should be always perfect in time of peace. I need not trouble my readers with a detailed examination of our present nominal corps, division, and brigade organization. I think that every soldier—certainly every soldier not concerned in the so-called organization of the moment—will agree with me in stating, in general terms, that our present corps, division, and brigade organization is as imaginary as was that “abortive scheme” of 1875 of which we are now told that it was only intended by its authors to reveal our weakness, but which figured in the “Army List” as the official plan of mobilization up to 1881.

We have considered in an introductory chapter for what the army is needed, and putting aside the questions whether we are to defend the neutrality of Belgium in the event of an

invasion of France by Germany through that country, whether we are to defend Turkey against Russia, or Egypt against France, any or all of which would only increase our military deficiencies, we have seen how—as we must certainly defend the United Kingdom, India, and those colonies that are unable to defend themselves, and protect our coaling stations, and as we must be able to make counter-attacks against Russia or against France in case of need—it is at least doubtful if we at present possess the military power which is requisite for mere safety. We have now, in this chapter, to consider in detail how far indeed this can be said to be the case. We have in short to investigate the weakness of our present position, and that waste which a comparison between expenditure and efficiency reveals. The working of the present system has been very frankly explained, before the Ordnance Inquiry Commission, by Mr. Smith, who at the time he gave his evidence was Secretary of State for War. In his answers to questions 52 and 53 he admitted that the manner in which the Army Estimates are affected by the opinion of the Cabinet is by the Secretary of State for War being told by his colleagues, “You must take off half-a-million.” In his answer to Q. 55 he explained the manner in which the Secretary of State carried out the Cabinet’s behests, namely, by doing without his guns, or by reducing the number of his men, or by a diminution in his stores. We have also the statement of another Secretary of State for War, the present Secretary, Mr. Stanhope, that within recent years Secretaries of State have allowed their stores to be almost reduced to the vanishing point, with the result of positive danger to the

country. This is the nature of the present system as described by Secretaries of State for War, and I fail to see that the reforms announced by Mr. Stanhope at the close of the last session of Parliament will in any way reduce its dangers. The net result of the present state of things has been described by the Adjutant-General, Lord Wolseley, in his evidence before the same Commission as that which examined Mr. Stanhope, in the following words: "I consider that the position of England at the present moment, as regards its army, is very unsatisfactory. If a hostile force were to land upon our shores of, say, 100,000 men, there is no reason whatever, if that hundred thousand men were properly led, why they should not take possession of London."\* Again, at Q. 2,768, he said, "We are not in the position we ought to be in, nor do I believe we are in the position we should be in if the English people were told the whole truth." We hear a great deal of the progress that has been made by this country in military matters in recent years, but few competent observers would venture to state that we are as strong relatively to foreign Powers as we were some years ago. As compared with Italy and Russia we certainly have lost ground; and if Italy is a possible ally, Russia is at least a possible foe. Although there has been incessant and even feverish activity in this country, there has been no such increase in power as in the case of Russia or of Italy. The army has been worried with constant change, but it is difficult to see where there has been any great increase in positive strength; and a loss in relative strength, as compared with

\* Q. 2766.

the two nations I have named, is capable of proof. Our home battalions are still mere depôts, and even those that are first for foreign duty are not fit for service as they stand, and would have, in the case of sudden war, to be largely supplemented by volunteers from others, or reserve men who have perhaps never seen the regiment to which they are going, with consequent loss of cohesion and regimental feeling.

Great efforts were made at the time of the Queen's Jubilee to produce a large military show, but, although the total number of troops turned out was not very great, it must be remembered in the first place that the Aldershot Review, where it was supposed that two army corps appeared, exhibited a considerable number of the same troops who had already been paraded in London. In spite of this, nothing like the two army corps which we had been promised took part in the review. The first army corps was very short in numbers of what an army corps should be; it had nothing like its proper proportion of subsidiary services: and the second army corps was a mere loose mass of volunteers. Every soldier is perfectly aware that from this point of view the turn-out was a sham. The newspapers were told that two army corps were to be paraded to England and to the world, but, instead of that, not one army corps was really produced. There was artillery enough for one army corps, but artillery in what can only be described as a "scratch" condition: batteries of horse artillery with six guns and batteries with four guns; batteries of field artillery with six guns and batteries with four guns; while the guns them-

selves were of every sort and size. Roughly speaking, we turned out about twenty thousand regular troops, with about a hundred guns, which is considerably less than the peace parade of a French or German army corps. Our deficiencies will appear in a still harsher form if we inquire how long it would take us to mobilize even a single army corps. Our most rapid mobilization up to the present day has been that before the first Egyptian campaign. Preparations were commenced at the beginning of July. They became very active on the day of the bombardment of Alexandria, the 11th of July, and embarkation began on the 30th of July, and continued until the 11th of August. Thus, as has been pointed out by Captain Wilkinson, a month was required to mobilize a single army corps, though the operation had been expected for a long time. In 1870 the German mobilization order was issued on the night of the 15th July, and on the night of the 31st July there were fifteen army corps with 450,000 men in line on the French frontier. The fifteen clear days which were then occupied in mobilization and concentration have now been halved in the preparations both of Germany and France, and it is computed by the able French writers in *La Revue Militaire de l'Étranger* that Germany could now mobilize thirty-five army corps in the same time which it took her to mobilize fifteen in 1870.

The subject of the existence of two army corps in England is closely connected with that of the reduction of the horse artillery, which I have already discussed. While the War Office defence of the reduction assumes that we are left with

sufficient horse artillery for two army corps and a cavalry division, I have here to point out that this means really sufficient horse artillery on a peace footing. The attenuated peace batteries would have to be placed on a war footing when the time came, and the only means of so doing which now exist would be the robbing of some batteries for the sake of others. As horse artillery cannot be suddenly improvised, and as there is no specially trained reserve of men and horses, such as exists in other countries, it is certain that this process would be attempted, and that the net result would be that we should find ourselves in possession of horse artillery enough for only one army corps, with a few guns and a few trained men over, but without trained horses, for the second. To be in a satisfactory position we should need to set aside a number of batteries intended, like the fifth squadrons of the Prussian cavalry, to hand over their best-trained horses to those which are the first to take the field. The Secretary of State for War himself has said that there are no horses available in the country to make our horse artillery fit for active service in any short time. He destroys horse artillery to create transport, although transport horses are much more easily obtained, while horse artillery batteries cannot be safely sent into the field with a large number of horses new to their work. There is another source of deficiency with regard to horse artillery, and also indeed field artillery, which should be remembered in this connection. Our Indian batteries are in good condition, but should they be engaged in war we have no means for meeting casualties in them. The defects of our reserve system

are considerable (as compared with the reserve system of foreign countries) as concerns all arms, but they are especially great as concerns cavalry and artillery. If the reserves are called out often for small wars the men have a difficulty in maintaining their civil positions and crowd the workhouses; while if they are not called out for these wars the men are soon wholly without such training as cavalry and artillery require.

Although we cannot find two army corps, it cannot be said that the British army falls short in numbers. The army proper, the militia, the army reserve and militia reserve, the volunteers, the native troops in India, the 36,000 Canadian militia of the first line, about 16,000 men in Australia and New Zealand, the South African local forces of between six and seven thousand well-trained men, the Irish constabulary, the armed and drilled portion of the Indian constabulary, the Hyderabad contingent, and the Marines, easily make up a total of a million of men fit for some kind of land service, of whom very nearly the whole are supposed to serve even in time of peace. The nominal peace armed forces of the British Empire form one of the large peace armies of the world. Our war army falls, however, even nominally, very far short of those of France, of Germany, and of Russia. Not only are our numbers large, but the quality of a considerable portion is very good. The most skilled foreign observers seem willing to admit that our regular troops are as good as the best that can be found, if not, as some think, the very best. A former French military attaché in London, M. de Grancey, has said that the "extraordinary pluck of the

militia and volunteers" would "allow our neighbours to set on foot an incomparably fine army if they only knew how to go about it." As regards numbers, it is of some interest to consider what we were able to do during the great war. Although the land forces that we maintained abroad were only as a rule fifty to sixty thousand men of British troops, we had on foot in India and in England, including the well-drilled volunteers, about 900,000 men; and it is probable that, in the event of a new war against a neighbouring Power, as we were able in 1804 to maintain nearly half a million of volunteers, so with our increased population a similar proportion of 1,200,000 or 1,300,000 volunteers would easily be forthcoming. We have men enough and money enough, but the men and the money are at the disposal of a great number of different Cabinets and Governments scattered over the whole globe, and there is no power whatever for the general concentration of our forces.

It is as true now as it was in 1875, when Captain Claser penned words which I have already quoted, that England has neither peace footing nor war footing. The fact remains that even the famous two army corps cannot as yet be found. People were more scared by the recent naval manœuvres, by the capture of Falmouth by Admiral Fremantle and by his entrance into the Thames, than by the Aldershot Review, which indeed seems to have been regarded as a comforting spectacle. Surely, however, it was discouraging to have the practical proof before us that our two army corps, whether for an expeditionary force or even for home defence, are as



imaginary as were the former eight. The naval manœuvres may have been useful if they brought home to the civil population the truth of those propositions which are familiar to all sailors, that the arsenals, the dockyards, and the coaling stations, must be armed with efficient fortifications and with the most modern guns, in order that the fleet may be free to sail about the seas and clear them of the enemy. But the naval manœuvres did not show that we had been deceived, whereas the inability to discover first the eight army corps of 1875, and now the two army corps of the present day, is grave indeed.

I repeat that we need have no concern about numbers or about quality. It is in the ability to make use of our numbers and of the quality of the men—it is, in short, in organization and administration—that we are the most defective. There are some who think that, although there is want of organization, nevertheless great progress in this respect has been made of late. Much remains to be done, they tell us; but, according to their view, an immense distance has already been traversed. Those who say so, and who point to the steps that have been taken of late to prepare two army corps as a field army for foreign service, seem unaware of the fact that after the breakdown of the eight army corps arrangement we were already supposed to have reached this stage of development which we are again supposed to have reached in 1888, and which is claimed as a great advance at the present day. In the publications of “*La Réunion des Officiers*,” published in 1877, there will be found a little work upon the British army, executed with much care, in which it is ex-

plained that, although six of the eight corps are mere figures of men available for defence, two army corps are really ready for immediate mobilization. They were supposed to consist of 36,000 men each, with 200 guns in all, a number both of men and guns which is certainly not ready for mobilization at the present day.

While I am prepared to admit that the numbers of the British army are sufficient, and while it is the case that the numbers available for home defence are amply sufficient and need only proper organization, this cannot be said to be the case with regard to the numbers assigned to the defence of certain portions of the Empire. The numbers available for the defence of some of the great colonies are sufficient. The South African colonies have been reducing their forces of late, so it is to be hoped that they think they are in a proper condition of defence. New Zealand possesses a large force which is also undergoing a rapid reduction. The Australian colonies, with the exception of West Australia, as to which an arrangement has lately been come to with the other colonies, have in my opinion a sufficient force; and the Australians are justified in being proud of the defences of their principal ports and of the efficiency of their infantry and artillery force. Canada is not, in my belief, making those sacrifices of money which her extremely dangerous frontier demands; but Canada possesses an admirable organization, and it is only money votes that are wanting to drill a sufficient portion of the militia to make her strong.

The chief local deficiency in numbers to which I allude is that which has to do with Indian defence. If the native

troops could be relied upon in the field against a Russian enemy, whilst order could be kept in India in the event of a Russian war by the very numerous armed constabulary, the numbers would be amply sufficient for the present. It is the fact, however, that the condition of the country is such that a large British force must be left behind in India in garrison. It is also a fact well known to our own chief officers, and still better known to our probable enemies, that only a part of the native army can be counted on for service in the field against a European enemy, and especially against picked troops. I myself fear that that portion of the 68,000 British troops which can be spared after providing for the very numerous necessary garrisons, the Goorkhas, and a certain number of cavalry regiments could alone be placed in line. The so-called garrisons in India are not real garrisons in the military sense, so much as forces left behind to look after the fidelity of the native princes, of the forces of those princes, and of a portion of our own native troops. This view is disputed by some of our Indian officers, who think that, since the recent reforms instituted by Sir Frederick Roberts, over 50,000 men of the native troops have become serviceable, including all the cavalry and most of the Bengal infantry, especially the regiments composed of Sikhs. No one can be found, however, who puts the serviceable portion of the native army above 65,000 men, and it is a remarkable fact that we maintain in India a native army of which, according to the most optimistic view, only half will be useful at a pinch. The same officers who believe that half the native army could be trusted to fight the Russians

set, however, so high the "necessary garrisons" to be maintained in India that they hardly leave us any British troops to take the field. It would appear, from documents which have been published, that the latest calculations for a field army for service against the Russians have assumed that the infantry and cavalry to be used against the Russians in Afghanistan might be composed in equal proportions of white and of black troops. While this proportion might be safe as regards the cavalry, it is the general belief that we cannot find a large force of native infantry in India who, as at present organized, could face picked Russian troops. I admit that this danger is not pressing for some years, but it is none too soon to set to work to meet it, and we shall indeed little deserve to hold our Indian Empire if we do not make a proper use of the few years' respite that is still left to us. No doubt a formidable Russian attack upon India is still a matter of some little time. Russia cannot as yet collect, without long preparation, the amount of transport necessary for a march on India across the Afghan desert. On the other hand it is probable that not only will the Russian railways be rapidly extended through the Russian Empire, but that arrangements may be made for the extension of railway enterprise in Persia, and to several points upon the Afghan frontier. Day by day the heart of Russia, for military purposes, will be brought nearer and nearer India; and the difficulties in her way, which are still enormous, are disappearing at so rapid a rate that the time has certainly now come when we must be prepared to face the constitution of such an organization of our Indian forces

as will enable our generals to contemplate without alarm the possibility of our being forced to take the field.

There is one fact which ought to strike an Englishman of that optimist type of opinion which is too common in reference to this subject, namely, that no Russian attempts, when writing for Russians, to conceal the fact that military considerations alone have presided over the determination to press forward the construction of the Central Asian railways. These railways have been executed, so far as they have gone, with extraordinary success and speed, and they are still being hurried on. The speed and the expenditure are always justified in Russia on military grounds. Now military grounds in Central Asia mean menace to or attack on India, for Russia has no difficulty with her subject population in those parts. There is no question of defence, for no one menaces the Russian hold on Central Asia or can menace it; and when some English statesmen tell us that there is no reason for alarm with regard to the possibility of an eventual Russian attack on India, we can only reply that that is certainly not the Russian view. The Central Asian railway was recommended by the Russian War Office, planned by a Commission on which the War Office had the principal place, and is being executed by a general commanding railway battalions of the Russian army. We may ask our own people, as Demosthenes asked the Athenians in the second Philippic, "Do you for a moment imagine that these preparations are not directed against you?"

The extraordinary energy which has been displayed by the Russians in Central Asia in the last few years is in keep-

ing with that which they have shown in the reorganization of their army in Europe. In the conflict with the Afghans at Penjdeh the brunt of the fight was borne by the Merv militia and by other Mahommedan troops, and, although such troops could not be put in line against our regular army, the mere fact that in so short a time of occupation the Russians have been able to bring these men as loyal subjects into the field is most remarkable. We may well ask ourselves whether we could not, in turn, get a somewhat better hold than that which we at present have over the nearly 400,000 men who form the armies of the Indian native princes. These troops cost the people of India some twelve millions sterling a year,\* but are partly useless and partly mischievous. The success of the Russians in Central Asian organization is really marvellous. The men who led the night attack on Skobelev near Geok Tepe are now officers in the Russian levies, doing service at Askabad with the utmost possible enthusiasm. The Russians indeed claim that they have "turned the tigers into lambs;" but it is not necessary for us to go so far as to believe that the transformation is of that character; it is enough to say that these particular tigers or leopards have very completely changed their stripes or spots. The Russians have not only swallowed in the last twenty-four years a territory in Central Asia as large as the whole of Asia Minor, but what is more difficult, they have digested it.

The Russians are very frank with regard to their own success, but their statements upon this point are confirmed

\* Sir Salar Jung tells me that he thinks this much over-estimated.

by those of impartial foreign observers. At the same time they are equally frank about our position. It has been said by a Russian officer, who was present at the Delhi manœuvres of 1885-6, that the armies of the native princes "form an armed mob, very dangerous in case of internal complications." These armies, which are generally estimated at about 340,000 men, with 5,000 guns mostly in bad condition, have been set by our Indian Commission at a much higher figure. That Commission showed how some native states may become centres of mischief in the event of an invasion even in spite of the fact that their ruling princes may be loyal to the British connection. The present Nizam, for example, is friendly, but his capital is so dangerous that a very large European garrison would have to be retained in its neighbourhood in the event of war. The Nizam is constantly increasing the better portion of his armed force; yet his troops could not be pitted by us against picked Russians, and are a source of danger at home. War with Nepaul is, as the same Commission pointed out, a contingency which must be kept in view; and, I feel bound myself, unhappily, to add as a possibility, war with China acting through Nepaul. The Commission pointed out that such large garrisons would be necessary in India to act in aid of the armed police, and to watch the native states, that a larger force would remain in India than could be used against the Russians, and they allowed therefore for aid from home. In other words, the Indian Commission expect to be permitted to use our two army corps for Indian defence, although by using them, when they come into existence, they would leave

us without the possibility of taking the offensive in any other portion of the world.

It must be remembered that India cannot safely be defended only upon Indian, nor even upon Afghan soil; and if the two army corps, which we do not indeed as yet possess, but may one day see ready for expeditionary work, are to be used in Afghanistan, we are tied, contrary to all military principles, to purely defensive war. In all the previous wars of the United Kingdom—wars conducted when our strength was greater proportionately to that of other Powers than it is at present—we followed the proper military rule of making use of the attack as the surest means of defence. If this is the rule in European warfare, it should be a very law with us in regard to the defence of India, because in the possibility of that defence considerations of our national standing in the eyes of the natives play a large part. The Nizam's recent action is indeed a matter for much thankfulness, for India certainly cannot be defended if the native princes turn against us, and many of them, and even of the soldiers who eat our salt, will turn against us as soon as they think that we have become the losing side. Nothing will make them believe that we are the losing side as long as we are able to attack, but when we stand only on the defensive that belief is sure to spread. Moreover, in a military sense, if we are to let Russia attack us as often as she pleases upon the Afghan frontier, and confine ourselves to attempting to repulse the attack, our ultimate failure is a matter of moral certainty.

Of those who dispute the necessity for increasing our



Indian forces, some, I think, wish that we should quit India. It is not for me, in writing upon the military defence of the Empire, to enter into these political considerations, and I shall have to assume that it is necessary for us to defend the whole of the present possessions of the Crown. Others deny that there is any danger of attack on India by Russia. It is, of course, impossible to present the reader with quotations from Emperors, or even from leading Ministers, because such people in a country like Russia naturally keep their opinions to themselves. It is, however, an ascertained fact, that in 1878, when Russia had not consolidated her power in the flat plain of Sarakhs, and when the difficulties therefore were vastly greater than they are at the present time, the Russian generals were of opinion that a march upon India was worth attempting. The greatest Russian soldier of modern days over and over again stated it as his opinion that Russia could both attack India by a direct attack and raise an insurrection behind our forces, and he was indeed good enough to leave us a description of the actual means to be taken to organize great masses of Turcoman cavalry, so as to cover the Russian advance with a network of pillaging hordes. Since the death of Skobelev the Russians have advanced a vast distance on the road towards Herat, and they are now within easy striking distance of that city; and as their railways are being constructed, and the recently occupied districts becoming settled, the difficulties of transport are daily growing less. There are some, too, who think that while there was danger upon the side of Afghanistan up to July last, all danger has been put an end to by the settle-

ment arrived at at St. Petersburg. There was nothing, however, in that settlement but what had been foreseen.

A most able work upon *Russia and England in Central Asia*, published in Paris, and signed "M. H. L."—a work which may be looked upon as almost officially Russian, and which is filled with a bitterly anti-English spirit—contained, more than a year before the St. Petersburg settlement was arrived at, these prophetic words: "Although most probably the Central Asian question will, after the work of delimitation has been accomplished, enter for a time on a period of appeasement, there is every reason to foresee that the arrangement will have but a very limited duration." The writer puts out of sight the idea of an Afghan buffer under English protection, on the ground that Russia will insist that Afghanistan shall be kept free from internal disorders—a responsibility which is beyond our power. He then states that Russia would reject a partition of Afghanistan, and sums up his views by declaring that Russia intends for the present to organize her newly-annexed territories with a view to ultimate attack upon us. "Desirous of consolidating her new territories, Russia will wait until events make England powerless to cause her guarantee to be respected." "England will be at the orders of the Ameer of Afghanistan, forced to defend that country without having the right either to direct its policy or to organize its defence, the Ameer being unable to allow foreigners to garrison his country, even for the purpose of protecting him." The writer then points out that plundering expeditions will be carried on between the Afghan and the new Russian territories; that

we are unable to prevent these raids, but shall be held responsible for them ; and that Russia will always have a most excellent *casus belli* whenever she may need it, even if she does not tire out our patience in advance, and cause us to repudiate our responsibility for the population of the valley of Herat. The writer points out that Russia will choose her moment. As she selected the height of the Franco-German war to destroy those portions of the Treaty of Paris which she the most disliked, and as she selected for her last advance the moment of the fall of Khartoum and the retreat before the Mahdi, and of the disagreeable speeches of Prince Bismarck about England's colonial policy, so she will choose her next occasion equally well.

I think that I have established the risk that we run in India from eventual Russian invasion, and just as is the case in England, so also in India we have invasion itself, and the dangerous results of invasion panic, alike to fear. Can I equally make good the general propositions that I have advanced as to the inadequacy of our means for meeting the danger that exists? First, as to the quality of the native army. The Madras troops were condemned by a late Madras Commander-in-Chief himself, when he said that the "Madras Sepoy can never attain the Bengal standard." As even the Bengal standard is by no means uniformly good enough to lead us to put the whole Bengal army in the field against picked Russians, it may be judged what chance there is of our being able to use the Madras army in the field. In the minute by the Viceroy on the report of the Indian Army Commission it was pointed out that India cer-

tainly does not obtain for the enormous amount of money spent by her the best war engine that can be bought for the price. The Viceroy, like the majority of the Commission, was in favour of withdrawing the Madras and Bombay armies from the local governments, and of putting an end to the provincialism of our native armies. The arguments upon this point appear conclusive. If we have to fight Russia in Afghanistan it will be mere madness to attempt to do so with an army under varied civil controls. Lord Hartington's reply showed a most unfortunate leaning towards the retention of the local armies, evidently founded upon bad military advice at home. The Indian Government, answering him, again showed how the artificial distinctions of Presidencies are a constant source of trouble in accounts and in every detail of administration, cumbersome in time of peace, and intolerable during war. "To any impartial mind it will be manifest that the operations in Afghanistan were carried out with all the disadvantages, and with none of the advantages, attendant upon the operations of allied armies." Lord Kimberley unfortunately supported the opinion of Lord Hartington, and the Indian Government was overruled. It may safely be asserted that the decision was wrong, and that it will have to be reversed if we are successfully to defend India against Russia. The report of the Commission which was thus set aside was a weighty one; it was couched in strong terms, and was signed by men like Sir Frederick Roberts, who were "much impressed by the evils of the present Presidential system, and the defects of war administration worked by separate and dispersed agencies. . . . We

cannot close our eyes to the grave embarrassment to military affairs caused by the numerous and circuitous channels through which the smallest detail has to filter . . . Apart from all question of useless expense, the existence of such an arrangement as three separate military administrations . . . can no longer be defended. . . . When we discover that the anomaly is not merely useless, but hurtful to the efficiency of the army—that even in peace time it impedes the conduct of military affairs, hampers the energies of officers and men in war, and wastes the revenue of the country—we feel justified in condemning it.” This was the strong recommendation the discussion on which was finally brought to a close by Lord Kimberley’s curt reply to the Viceroy: “I have not failed to read your lordship’s remarks with attention, but as the questions raised have been already very fully discussed, and I have conveyed to you the decision of her Majesty’s Government upon them, there will I think be no advantage in prolonging the discussion.” The proposals thus received by Lord Kimberley have the support of Lords Lytton, Ripon, and Dufferin, Sir Donald Stewart and Sir F. Roberts, and of almost every member of Council who has served during the last eight years. It is only fair to admit that it was foolish of the Government of India to suppose that the Madras and Bombay military question could logically be dealt with by itself, and it is certain that unity of administration throughout the Indian peninsula will sooner or later be obtained—not only in military matters, but in all respects—by the abolition of the Governments of the two smaller Presidencies.

Some little progress has since been made in the direction advised by the Commission. The present Commander-in-Chief in India was, although at that time personally interested on the Presidency side, nevertheless himself the author of the proposal to place the armies of Madras and Bombay under the Commander-in-Chief in India. Although this was the essential part of the scheme vetoed by Lords Hartington and Kimberley, yet several reforms connected with it have been carried out of late. Instead of three commissariat and three ordnance departments, there is now but one commissariat department for all India and but one ordnance department. The "remount" has been brought under one head, as have been transport and military accounts. On the other hand, clothing, military works, barrack and veterinary departments, remain as they were; and nothing has been done towards the reorganization of the medical departments.

As regards our native army in India, we have to face the fact that while our white troops in India are in a condition of the highest possible efficiency, and probably form the best army of their numbers in the world, on the other hand the majority of the native troops admittedly cannot take the field against our only probable enemy of importance. When we come to consider the remedy for this state of things, the greatest difficulties will be found to exist. The obvious step of still further increasing the number of white officers in the native regiments, and recruiting the men only from the military races, so as to produce an army all the regiments of which would be as fit to take the field as are the Goorkhas,

and some of the Sikh and other cavalry regiments at the present time, is itself full of difficulty. It is generally admitted by critics of the native army that the native officer, excellent as he is in camp or quarters, is not fit to command in the field against the Russians. If, however, we still further increase the present strength of white officers in native regiments, which has lately been increased in some degree, we take away that incentive to long loyal service of natives which at present exists, and we run the risk of discontent. The mere existence of a large number of white officers in a regiment will not prevent mutiny, and the bulk of the regiments which mutinied in 1857 were regiments with a full complement of over twenty white officers. The Government have lately agreed to the addition of one British officer to each regiment of native cavalry and infantry, and four more officers are to be at once added to each corps in the event of service beyond the North-West frontier. It is the opinion of the highest authorities that it would be madness for us to attempt to meet a Russian army with native troops having the present complement of British officers, and I should be disposed to doubt if the addition of one officer in time of peace, and the sudden addition of four more strangers in time of war with Russia, would make much alteration in the situation. If we come to the larger change of a separate army for India, or a separate army for Indian and colonial service, we do not avoid these difficulties in reference to the native army of which I speak, because we shall still have to decide whether a native army

is to be kept up in addition, and, if so, how that native army is to be created out of the present force.

As we have some of the ablest, if not the very ablest, of English soldiers at present employed in India, it is important to know what is their view of the situation; and I have taken some pains to collect the various speeches and writings of Sir Frederick Roberts and others. Sir Frederick Roberts, I think, believes with every one else that the quality of the native army is very varied, and that there are some very good troops and some very bad troops within its ranks. The Madras troops, which he thoroughly knows, he considers fit to fight against certain enemies of the British Empire in India, but unable to fight against a Russian enemy unless supported by an overwhelming British force. The Commander-in-Chief agrees also with other observers in thinking the Sikhs, the Goorkhas, and the Pathans or Mahommedans living on or beyond the North-West frontier, excellent troops; and in believing that the Bengal cavalry, and the Goorkha and the Punjaub regiments of infantry, are as good as possible for the work they will have to do. On the other hand, I fancy that Sir Frederick Roberts, like all other competent observers, admits that any mercenary army of a different race from its employers must of necessity be more or less a source of anxiety, and that even the most trusted of our native troops might, under certain circumstances, mutiny. The position of a Power which with a handful of civilians and troops occupies an enormous country of 300,000,000 inhabitants, while the greatest military Power of the world is gradually becoming her near neighbour, is a delicate position.



A feeling of unrest spreads over the whole country, and it is not to be expected that the native army should escape altogether from the influence of that feeling, aroused by the threatening position of Russia on the borders of Afghanistan. The recent nearer approach of Russia to the heart of Afghanistan has caused a great necessary increase of expenditure of Indian money. The nearer she comes the more money must be spent. More British troops have to be kept in India, and railroads have to be made through very difficult country, without any hope of their ever being remunerative works. It is the universal opinion of the Indian authorities of the present day that India is lost to us if Russia should be allowed to press forward into Afghanistan after the promise given to defend the frontiers of the Ameer. If after the pledges given and the arrangements made we were to remain inactive when the Russians occupied any part of Afghan territory, every one in India would believe that we felt ourselves unable to cope with them, and all faith in our ability to retain possession of the country would be lost. The Afghans and the border tribes would then join the Russians, and render their invasion of India a comparatively easy operation, and our native troops would begin to doubt the wisdom of remaining loyal. The Commander-in-Chief in India, I believe, ridicules, as every soldier must ridicule, the opinion of those writers who think that India can be defended by mere defence without active offensive operations. He seems to agree with me as to the impossibility of attacking Russia in the Caucasus, or through Asia Minor, or through Persia, or, as certain English strategists have proposed, from the

Baltic. I believe, however, that he also differs from myself on a similar point, and is inclined to think a serious attack on Russia upon the Pacific coast to be practically impossible. Under these circumstances, if I am wrong in thinking, as I do, that Russia could still be bled to death at Vladivostock, offensive operations are only possible towards Central Asia, and those operations would be costly and difficult in the extreme. Those who know Sir Frederick Roberts will not think him an alarmist, but it is pretty clearly his impression that war between England and Russia for the possession of India is inevitable, by reason of the Russian determination to advance.

Besides the inefficiency of a large portion of the native army and the shortness of numbers of the white army after the garrisons have been filled, there is another great difficulty connected with the army in India. The English force is extremely costly, and its numbers cannot be increased to those which are necessary for the defence of the country, because of its costliness and the inability of the Indian revenues to meet a greater charge. It is admitted on all sides, even by those who would maintain the existing Indian system, that the cost of the present state of things is heavier to India than would be the cost of a separate European army. It is also admitted that at the present moment the best men have to be sent to India, and that, while the cost to India is enormous, the English taxpayer obtains at home, in return for his very large expenditure, the service of battalions which are only mere depôts for the Indian regiments. The greatest difficulty cannot be more simply stated than it

has been in the last report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting, "that more than half the army is always serving abroad, and that in India there are nearly as many British infantry soldiers as there are serving in the United Kingdom," while "it has been decided on sanitary grounds that men under twenty shall not, as a rule, go to India." It follows that the home battalions are so weak in trained men as to be practically only dépôt battalions. Even in spite of the keeping away from India of the younger men, there is still a balance of health shown by the statistics in favour of the Company's troops before the Mutiny—that is, of the old system of a separate army.

Although we have abolished the separate army, practically it may be said that the regiments never come home, for the time that regiments are left in India has been continually increased for financial reasons, until the reliefs have become the real changes in the lives of the men, and it is a mere accident, that cannot be taken into account when the recruit enlists, whether the regiment in India to which he is sent is likely to come home in his time or not. As far as the soldier is concerned, the regiments might just as well be permanently localized in India. Chance alone decides when a man enlists whether he goes to India, and the absolute uncertainty of the soldier's future is a hindrance to recruiting.

It is an encouraging fact to those who believe in the necessity of a separate army, that the long-service corps of the Royal Marines have no difficulty in obtaining any number of recruits, and are able to raise their standard of height to a much higher figure than that which is required for the line.

This fact points to there existing a large number of men who when they join the army prefer to go for certain to foreign service. There are many men who like a life of adventure, and who for one reason or another wish to leave their country and to start a new career abroad; and there is no reason to suppose that the recruiting for the long-service Indian and colonial army would come into conflict with the recruiting for the short-service army for home. There are plenty of recruits to be obtained for a long-service army of limited numbers, though not, of course, enough for India and for England as well. Probably it would be desirable to count service at Gibraltar, Malta, Halifax, and some other stations as home service, and to give the Indian army Singapore, Hong Kong, and other distant stations; but I shall have the opportunity of discussing these matters of detail later on, when I come to the consideration of my proposed reforms. Service in the home army would become more popular than it is at present, and on the other hand I am convinced that there would be no want of recruits for a well-paid long-service Indian and colonial army, while it would be a financial gain to India even if the rates of pay were largely increased.

So little doubt is there as to the effecting of a monetary saving by the creation of a separate army that many of the abler opponents of the scheme admit that the change would increase efficiency and that it would effect a saving, but only deny that it is opportune. They say that it would be wrong to risk so great a change at a moment when we are likely before long to find ourselves engaged in a death-

struggle with Russia for the possession of the Indian Empire, and they are the more opposed to any radical change at the present time because they are convinced, as indeed I am also convinced, that our present white army in India is in a highly efficient state. On the other hand, I may point out that we are likely to have some years of breathing time while the Russian railroads are being made complete, and that a separate army could only be brought gradually into existence, the point of our spear remaining unblunted until our new spear was ready. I think myself that if re-organization were undertaken now there would probably be time to complete it before we could be seriously attacked. If it is long postponed that will not be the case. I am strengthened in my opinion by the fact that Sir F. Roberts, who believes in the certainty of Russian attack on India, thinks that we have yet time before it comes to create the two separate armies—one of three years' service for the "home," and one of twelve years' service for the "foreign"—which he advocates.

In the present chapter I am concerned only with showing the weak points of our existing system, and not with the examination of the details of my proposed remedies. Among those defects, however, must be exhibited in their place the deficiencies of our scheme of Indian defence which are brought upon us by short service. The Indian requirement of acclimatization in the soldier is absolutely inconsistent with that short service and that development of the reserve system which our European army needs. The requirements of home service—short term, large reserves, and a local

organization in view of mobilization—are the exact opposite of the Indian requirements. It is doubtful whether, considering the matter from the home point of view, the necessity of supplying India is not a greater strain than the present system will bear. When the matter is looked at from the Indian side, we are told that India is being ruined by the present system. To a civilian like myself it seems pretty clear that India should have a local long-service army, England having a short-service system as a reserve-manufacturing machine. It appears to me that the home cavalry and artillery should have longer service than the infantry; and that, looking to the number of our volunteers, we ought to have an unusually large proportion of the former arms. With regard to engineers, I think the volunteers might produce pretty good corps, but not cavalry or artillery, which have nothing in common with the work of civil life.

Our little wars should be conducted by the Indian army supplementing local forces. This would have the further advantage that the Indian system is less “amateurish” than the English system; and if we compare the Afghan campaigns, which were carried out by India, with the English campaigns in the Transvaal and Egypt, we find the superiority of the Indian system for our small wars. While as a civilian I find these views impose themselves on me with the force of a mathematical certainty, I have to admit that the weight of military opinion is against me. The able essays upon the subject which were printed by the Royal United Service Institution are, by a majority, hostile. The

officer who obtained the prize desires, as it seems to me, simply to go backwards instead of forwards. He wishes to revert in England to a system from which each Continental Power in turn has been driven by defeat in a serious campaign. We began in England to create a short-service army which would in time have given us large reserves and made us strong for European war without an increased expenditure, but we are gradually drifting back to the old state of things, simply on account of the inapplicability of short service to Indian conditions. Against much hostile military opinion I can virtually set the favourable opinion of Sir F. Roberts. It is useless for those who resist the creation of a separate army to base their opposition on the fact that the matter was thoroughly gone into in 1857-8. At that time Prussia had not crushed Austria or France, and the short-service system had not been devised for our use at home. The agreement then in favour of the centralization of the army at home has no bearing upon the present state of things. We are trying now to make one organization do for two services which are absolutely opposite, and indeed antagonistic in character. Long service is impossible, because men will not enlist in sufficient numbers for general long service, and because long service is too expensive for the number of men produced in time of war. Real short service in the Continental sense is impracticable, because it involves such a constant change of troops between England and India as is enormously expensive, and, as regards India, absolutely inefficient. If we could once throw off the nightmare of an Anglo-Indian army centralized

at home, we might save much charge to India; and by shortening service at home, and bringing the militia and volunteers into their proper place in line, enormously increase our defensive and our offensive force for war.

Other Powers have found it necessary to keep up a separate army for their Eastern colonies; the French are establishing such an army for their Empire in the East, but then the French have universal service. There is a closer resemblance between the military system of Holland and our own, and Holland has a separate army for her large Indian possessions. It is sometimes asserted that the Netherlands-India army of the Dutch has been a failure, and as I have seen it myself, and enjoyed the friendship of one of its most distinguished Commanders-in-Chief, I feel called upon for a few moments to examine that point. At one time the colonial army of Holland was badly recruited, owing to the practice of taking without sufficient medical examination mere idlers from France or Belgium who presented themselves to the Dutch agents at Antwerp and other foreign towns. These men, sent as they were to a climate far more deadly than that of India, stationed in Batavia and Northern Sumatra, died like flies. Fearful mortality from climate is not peculiar to separate or local armies. It is worse when the short-service soldiers of Europe are sent without selection to the East. The French in Tonquin have sufficiently proved the truth of this elementary proposition, if proof were necessary. In a work upon the "Army of the Future," a distinguished French general, writing in favour of the creation of a separate army for tropical service, has said: "Youths who have just



joined their regiments are suddenly sent off to the colonies : their military knowledge is incomplete ; home-sickness makes sad ravages among them ; many, who are not fully developed men, succumb to the climate and have to be sent back to France. The effectives are rapidly and greatly reduced. This policy is costly, for sending the men home is a heavy charge." The Dutch separate army is regarded by scientific officers who have seen it at work as a success rather than a failure. The Netherlands-India army consists of 29,000 men, of whom nearly half are Europeans, more than half of the Europeans now being Hollanders by birth. The latest French writers who have discussed the organization of the Dutch Indian army have spoken of it as a model army, and proposed it to the French for imitation ; and certainly no argument against a separate army for India can now be based upon the assumption of its failure. In spite then of a heavy mass of military opinion, which was rather the other way when the amalgamation was originally proposed, I cannot mention the failure of our existing system to give us sufficient troops for the defence of India without overburdening the revenues of that country, except in connection with the suggestion of that scheme for reversion to a separate Indian army which I shall develop in one of my later chapters.

I have been willing to assume throughout that our numbers are sufficient upon the whole if properly organized (although with a local deficiency of numbers in India), and our regular forces excellent—as good as, or superior to, any in the world. At the same time it would be foolish not to face the

fact that an army such as ours—constantly taking part in little wars against savage tribes, but not having, since the invention of modern armies and of modern weapons, been called upon to take the field against a European force—must from time to time fall into the rear in some respects. It is the opinion of the highest Prussian military authorities that our present attack formations, “by short rushes,” are thoroughly bad and would lead to disaster in time of war. I am told that the system was the result of a compromise between different schools of opinion—compromise, when the safety of the nation depends on being exactly right! This is a question far too technical for a civilian, and I merely quote the opinion without expressing any view with regard to it. The Prussians confidently say that those who have prepared our present system of attack can have had no experience of modern European war, and they say pretty much the same thing with regard to our latest instructions as to artillery fire. In some other points we are perhaps yet even weaker; for example, no English or foreign artillery officer will pretend that our garrison artillery as at present constituted attains the highest possible level in scientific preparation for war.

Of other weak points in our existing system, the deficiencies of the militia will have to be further referred to when we come to the consideration of those remedies by which, among other objects, I should seek to give the militia and the volunteers their properly recognized position in our scheme of home defence. In the event of mobilization there would be a deficiency of officers for the

militia amounting to many hundreds. At the same time there are in this country so large a number of retired officers still fit to serve that a very small amount of attention to the subject would provide us with the means to meet this weak point; and I think that it must be allowed that the English and Scotch drilled militia, at all events as far as infantry go, are an efficient force which would play its part respectably in the field even if the mobilization were very sudden.

I need not in the present chapter repeat what I have said as to deficiencies upon such other points as the defence of coaling stations and of the lines of Imperial communication, as to which Lord Carnarvon has lately greatly alarmed the public. While the condition of the navy and of our coaling stations, and fortresses, and arsenals, and commercial ports, and lines of communication, is undoubtedly far from satisfactory, they are points upon which the public is alive to the danger, and it is therefore more important, I think, to direct attention to those points connected with the army in which the dangers which threaten us are even greater.

In his article which appeared in *Blackwood* in August last, and to which I have already referred, the late Baker Pasha, who was a competent authority upon the point, admits the existence of the whole of the deficiencies and weak points which were described by me last June. He states in strong but general terms that all soldiers are agreed that we do not get our money's worth for our money, and that the army as it now stands does not meet the requirements of the nation; but when we come to the more important

question, because the one as to which more difference of opinion exists, what changes should be made or what should be the remedies applied, General Baker suggests a Royal Commission. He hardly does more than hint at his own views. So far as those views are stated they are my own, for he would draw that sharp distinction which I would draw between the short-service infantry and the cavalry and artillery of this country, and would keep up cavalry and artillery at a war strength in time of peace; but on other matters he is silent, and suggests, as I say, a Royal Commission. Now, in trusting the revision of our military system to Committees and Commissions, which have for Parliamentary reasons to be chiefly composed of civilians, we get no doubt great independence of judgment, but find it combined with extraordinary ignorance. For example, one of the most important of these inquiries has lately been undertaken by a Parliamentary body the chairman of which, although a man of great ability, who had previously been a Secretary of State, was under the impression, after he had long presided over his Committee, that short service in England meant three years' service. This chairman believed in fact that we had adopted in this country a service as short as that of Germany or shorter than that of France, instead of having as a fact the longest service of any of the Great Powers.

The most valuable outcome of the recent inquiries has been General Brackenbury's evidence as to the relative expenditure of the United Kingdom and of other countries upon military services. France spends upon her army about

28 millions sterling, and on her navy about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  or 9 millions, or between  $36\frac{1}{2}$  and 37 millions sterling on the two. Lord Randolph Churchill lately made a very different estimate, but I do not know whence he obtained his figures. He probably excluded the French extraordinary expenditure and that portion of the French loans which he ought to have included. On the other hand he seems to have correctly estimated the military and naval expenditure of Germany, which is apparently far less, but which is supplemented out of the French indemnity of 1870. The noble lord is perfectly right, of course, in his statement of the British expenditure, which on the average now is about 18 millions on the home army, 12 millions on the navy, and 20 millions on the Indian army, or over 50 millions on the whole, without counting the expenditure of Canada or the southern colonies. The enormously greater expenditure by England upon her army than by France and Germany upon their armies is partly explained by the apparent cheapness of conscription, but is not wholly so explained. The French are in a position to put in the field  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions of trained men, with ultimately a million and a half of untrained men behind them; their fortresses are perfect, and perfectly armed and provisioned; their troops are well armed, and their transport and stores complete. On the other hand, Lord Randolph Churchill was justified in saying that we have not a single fortress that is adequately armed and properly provisioned and equipped with stores; that our reserve of guns and projectiles is wretched; that our arms are altogether behind the age; and that if we went to war we should

have to begin by pouring out money like water. Moreover there is a great deal of the same kind that might be said with truth. The French naval estimates, although extravagant as compared with those of Italy, compare on the whole favourably with our own, especially when we remember that the French navy keeps up out of its estimates a splendid gun factory at Ruelle, and pays for a large part of the coast defences. We, on the other hand, shall probably have to go to a great cost in the future to establish a naval gun factory, or at all events a naval division of the factory at Woolwich. France, too, has stronger naval reserves of men than we have, and has far more trained dockyard workmen ready to execute war repairs. If we count the 4,000 coastguards into our navy, of which they really form a part, we have only about 20,000 other men with naval training upon whom the navy can for a certainty draw in time of war; whereas the French have practically a limitless reserve, having in fact 140,000 men who have received naval training, and who are bound to serve in the navy in time of war.

If we turn to the army side we must recognize the fact that we shall soon have to adopt the small-bore repeater, and that our reserves of rifles will have to be increased, as they always have been insufficient. We shall have to store a vast quantity of new ammunition in all our fortresses. We are behind also in the biggest guns, and shall have to supply our coaling stations, as well as our home fortresses, with very costly guns and shields; while we have still a great deal to do in re-arming our field artillery. We shall have to pay for our reserve of horses, if it is to be made a good one with-

out compulsory powers, as well as either to increase our cavalry and artillery, or to create a very costly real reserve for these mounted branches; and the last things cannot be done in a hurry, for it takes two years to make a good cavalry private, and even longer to make a good artilleryman.

Not only is it the case—as was shown by General Brackenbury—that the British War Office costs far more than all the war ministries of the German Empire, but it must be remembered that a good deal of the work which would in other countries fall upon the War Office is in the case of the British Empire discharged in India. In my own opinion the Treasury is responsible for a great portion of the waste which exists, not only in the War Office, but in some other departments of the State. By insisting on too close a control of detail it has driven the offices into the habit of deliberately deceiving it where large items are at stake. We should, I think, get much better value for our money if, having laid down once for several years a statement of our requirements and expenditure, we left the army to do the best they could with the money, without troubling ourselves as to the prices or mere items of account.

Much of the cost and inefficiency of our War Office is caused by the fact that it tries to do that which in other countries is done by the various army corps, as well as its own proper work. The outcome of this is that all the work is done twice over, and that the officers employed in the various localities are made to write all day long, forwarding documents to the War Office, instead of themselves dealing with the matters as they would in Continental countries.

The result is that a very large establishment in Pall Mall is fully occupied in time of peace, and must certainly break down in time of serious war. Officers are afraid of their own shadows in administrative matters, and dare not incur the smallest expenditure, even for the purpose of saving money, unless they pay it out of their own pockets. Cases have occurred in which officers have been sharply reproved for acting locally so as to save money. We are always in this country laughing at the centralization which exists abroad, but no army is so centralized in administration as our own, and none so certain to break down through over-centralization whenever a heavy strain comes to be thrown upon the War Office. We ought to aim at allowing officers in the districts the same sort of responsibility which Lord Wolseley takes upon himself in respect of the expeditions which he commands, and men trained in this way in time of peace would be better able to perform the corresponding duties which must fall upon them in time of war.

We spend, I repeat, in India about 20 millions upon our army, and in England over eighteen nominally, of which more than a million is really for the navy, as was brought out by the Select Committee of the House of Commons.\* For an expenditure of 19 millions the Germans can put into the field 19 army corps of 37,000 men each, besides an enormous force of garrison troops and territorial army, of which they could rapidly make a field army of 35 army corps in all. For an expenditure of twice 19 millions we can put into the field in India two army corps, of which one is composed of

\* This question of account between the two services has now been arranged.



native troops, but in the United Kingdom, in General Brackenbury's words,\* "owing to our defective organization, we should scarcely be able to put one; but if the army were properly organized we should be able to put two into the field." General Brackenbury showed that Germany has since 1870 spent £200,000,000 sterling on armament, fortresses, and so forth. Although we spend fully 37 millions sterling a year upon our army, General Brackenbury pointed out that its organization is still defective because it is "starved for money": for example, it is wanting in horses and the means of obtaining those horses on the outbreak of war, in camp equipment, transport, vehicles, and stores necessary to enable an army to take the field. "It has not got the horses or the means of obtaining those horses with great rapidity in the case of war, and no mobilization can be made without horses; and, to the best of my belief, it has not got the equipment and stores sufficient to enable it to take the field immediately. That defective organization is largely due to the money not having been spent upon horses, stores, and equipment." General Brackenbury pointed out that the absence of compulsory military service affects the whole of the figures, but, of course, affects them in nothing like the degree which would account for the difference.

The evidence of two very able military members of the House of Commons before Lord Randolph Churchill's Committee was to the effect that our present reserves, so far as they consist of mounted men, are useless, inasmuch as the men rust so fast under our system as to make our plan for

\* 3668.

the composition of reserves in fact inapplicable to cavalry, horse artillery, and a portion of the field artillery.

It is a melancholy fact that the best military opinion with regard to our existing reserves is that they are a failure, inasmuch as it is impossible with any fairness to the men to frequently call them out for three or four months at a time for our small wars, whereas their numbers are wholly inadequate for serious warfare. As has been said by an able writer who has discussed the question in a military periodical, they are enough to start our small machine, but totally inadequate to keep it going.

Our reserves, through not being trained as Continental reserves are trained, come back so rusty that they are far from useful. It is possible that we might in this country secure an advantage over Continental armies by having our special arms permanently on almost a war footing, while our infantry might be men of very short service, which would give us large reserves. Mr. Stanhope has ridiculed in the House of Commons the possibility of our doing that which other Powers do not do in keeping our artillery on a war footing; but, if it can be shown that the safety of the country is involved, it is possible, in spite of Mr. Stanhope's sneer, that the thing may ultimately be done. The Germans are beginning to admit the truth of this view which I am putting forward. The institution of the 5th squadron in the German cavalry enables them to mobilize at once the four squadrons for active service by supplying them with trained horses. The German cavalry is stiffened by the presence of a large number of men who

volunteer for four years' service in consideration of being allowed to enlist at seventeen and to select their arm and regiment. German scientific opinion declares that a perfect infantry soldier for offence can be formed in two years, and for defence in one. The infantry service is already reduced to little over two years by the *congé du roi*, and will soon be universally reduced to two years in practice. The best German officers point to the infantry of Frederick the Great, and declare that that splendid force (except the "foreigners," many of them Germans) consisted of "native" militia who served for one year with the colours. They say that Germany can only be defended by the offensive, and, if she is to exist at all, must win a great battle within three weeks of the declaration of war. For this purpose infantry with a service of two years is wanted; but in their opinion the Swiss militia, the Turkish territorial army, and even the English volunteers, form effective armies for defensive operations on their own soil, and especially for fighting in well-chosen positions behind field works.

Cavalry as well as artillery is, of course, a difficulty as regards our defensive army, but not a very serious one. It is unlikely that any foreign army making a rush upon London would be able to bring with it a large number of horses, and, the distances to be covered being short, cavalry would perhaps be neglected upon the invader's side in order to bring artillery. Cavalry, in the old sense of the word, volunteers cannot hope to produce; but if the yeomanry, in place of imitating the smartness of picked cavalry in their

gaudy uniforms, which exceed in brilliancy anything that our army can show, except in some of the Indian irregulars, would imitate the new Russian dragoons, they might yield to British defence a very serviceable force indeed. I know that I provoke some hostility from critics of ability by my advocacy of a cavalry upon the Russian model, but even they must admit that military opinion is itself divided upon the point. Colonel Wortley, in his admirable report on the French army, says that the great majority of authorities think it impossible for cavalry in future to charge infantry, and he admits that in 1878 the majority of the military authorities took the same view that I take, and that upon which the Russians have acted. There are, indeed, points in which Russia must be imitated by all who move, for the Russian is now the most modern of all modern armies. We may regret as much as we please the loss of brilliancy, and even the loss of smartness, but the absence of buttons from the new Russian uniforms means that due attention has been given to the relieving of the men from the necessity of wasting their time upon cleaning uniforms, to the easy tailoring of their uniforms by the men in time of war, and to the exclusion from soldiers' dress, and especially from the dress of cavalry, of everything which will catch the light and attract attention at a distance. This latter reason, with the similar necessity for preventing noise, is also the reason for the Russian substitution of leather for metal scabbards. Whether I am right or wrong in thinking that a cavalry of the Russian type is preferable to a cavalry of the Austrian type for general warfare, there can, I think, be no doubt

that for the defence of London a very simple cavalry force, intended to act otherwise than by charges in the field, would be most useful. To all who admire local forces there must be much attraction in our yeomanry, for it is almost the ideal of a local force. It is unfortunate that fashion has had so much to do, in our army as in all armies, with the drill and the turn-out of cavalry. Sir Frederick Roberts, who is not a man to neglect the graces of brilliant horsemanship and all that makes cavalry magnificent as a show, has, nevertheless, expressed the decided opinion that we want a great reform in our cavalry system, that the obstacle to that reform is the present cost of cavalry, and that there is nothing more important to our military future than that we should set ourselves to devise "a cheaper article" of this kind, in order that the numbers of our cavalry may be increased without a corresponding increase in expense. The Russians have devised a cheaper article, and the result is that *La Revue Militaire de l'Étranger* of 30th October last was able to say, "On peut donc dire, sans exagération, que la cavalerie russe est tenue constamment sur le pied de guerre," and to estimate its numbers on mobilization at 236,000 men, with 235,000 horses.

The mention of the yeomanry, recalling the local nature of that force, which, resembling as it does the original local constitution of the English militia, is one of which we may well be proud, suggests a word on the necessity, in considering our future military system, of pushing localization to a point of more complete development than it has as yet obtained. Nothing can be added to the statement of the

excellent results of localization made many years ago by Gouvion St. Cyr and other generals of his time. Marmont has said that "its advantages are great and incontrovertible. Recruiting, administration, the looking after the men on leave, the passing from peace footing to war footing—all are wonderfully simplified;" and he goes on to point out also the immense increase under a complete localization in the strength of the sentiment of military honour.

Another point to which attention will have to be directed is that of improving the position of non-commissioned officers by the reservation to them of certain classes of employment. In France a vast number of forms of public employment are exclusively reserved for non-commissioned officers of the army by a law of the 24th July, 1873, and later decrees. In England very little has been done in the same direction by Government, in spite of a great amount of talk. It has been said by the enemies of the system that old soldiers have not in this country given full satisfaction where they have been employed; but I do not know as a fact if the War Office messenger, whose conduct, in letting an important telegram some years ago be sent to the newspapers before it had gone to the Secretary of State, produced newspaper attack and afterwards inquiry, had or had not been a soldier. It is worthy of consideration whether the reservation of employment for non-commissioned officers might not be supplemented by a similar but wider scheme applied to the volunteers. It might, for example, easily be made a condition of taking part in the competitive examinations for the civil service that a man should be an efficient volunteer.

There are many steps of this kind which are not open to the disadvantages of a conscription and which might, nevertheless, be very useful in increasing the numbers and improving the efficiency of the army.

A reserve as important as that of men itself is a reserve of horses. Colonel Ravenhill has estimated that for mobilizing two army corps we should need more than 26,000 horses, or with the ordinary lines of communication nearly 29,000, of which we have 10,000 only, leaving a deficiency of between 18,000 and 19,000. He calculates that there should be a reserve of 40 to 50 per cent. to feed the waste of one campaign, for in the Crimea our waste was 80 per cent. per annum. Foreign experts have calculated the waste at a much higher figure, and have told us that we should need 10,000 horses a month. It had long been known that this difficulty was receiving the attention of the Secretary of State for War and of his military advisers, and there was some disappointment when it was found how merely tentative were the steps that Mr. Stanhope had decided to take.

As a general rule English officers have not much practical experience of mobilization, and many of them hardly perhaps realize the impossibility of mobilizing even two army corps in time of war unless we have made a real preparation of the horses in time of peace. The French and German armies have each over 300,000 horses, which they need on mobilization, ready to their hand, and would have little difficulty in keeping up, after mobilization, the supply of 20,000 or 30,000 horses a month, which they would require to meet losses in

the field. The whole of the carriages also, which number nearly 50,000 for each army, are ready.

In the principal Egyptian expedition we had only, as far as cavalry and artillery went, half one army corps in the field, and yet the cavalry and artillery remaining at home were reduced to inefficiency by the drafts of horses required to place on a war footing four weak cavalry regiments, eight batteries, and one small ammunition column. The purchase of the horses required to complete the establishment was found to be extremely difficult. The drain of horses in war is sometimes enormous. In the war of 1870-1 Germany horsed her cavalry three times over, and a horse that had gone through the whole war became a raree show. The Secretary of State for War in my opinion ought to be supported in any endeavour which would meet one of the greatest difficulties of the country, which would not violate conscience in the same degree in which it would be interfered with by personal military service, and which would obviously only anticipate in time of peace that which would inevitably be done, but done too late, in time of serious danger. A great foreign military writer has said: "No one knows, for it is very difficult to fully realize it, to what point goes the wicked waste of men and money in a 'system' which replaces the calculated and well-weighed efforts of war preparation in time of peace by ruinous attempts to make war preparations in time of war." What Mr. Stanhope has done is, however, far less than had been expected.

It is doubtful even whether many English officers realize the amount of preparation which has to be made in time of



peace. There are few of them who know the extent to which, on a declaration of war with a Great Power, we should have to ship stores, guns, and ammunition to our distant fortresses and coaling-stations; to despatch similar supplies to our fortresses at home, if indeed these supplies could be found; and the manner in which these preparations would interfere with our mobilization and concentration. There are comparatively few English officers who have seen a great European war, and it is difficult to realize its nature without having seen a good deal of it. Germany proposes to put 20 corps and the French 19 in their first line; and it is astonishing, I may say in passing, how few people in this country understand that the twenty or the nineteen corps are totally distinct from the defensive organization of each country—the fortress troops who form the garrisons, and the territorial troops, who, resembling our own volunteers, only with more training, would probably at first be left behind. Now, it is interesting to remember that one such corps takes seven days to despatch from one railway station; that its guns take from seven to ten miles of road; that a corps takes a whole day to pass a given spot even on the widest roads, and far more than that time on the generally narrow roads of England. We can send off with ease 40,000 volunteers, with no cavalry, and few if any guns, and no ammunition columns; but English officers as a rule hardly know the strain upon our railways which would be produced by an invasion scare, with the despatch of cavalry and field artillery to meet it, and with the constant stream of food and ammunition which would be needed.

The question of horses is one of the most difficult of all questions, because it is the one in which sudden action is surrounded with impossibilities. It should be remembered also that political considerations often prevent the buying of horses when they could be bought before the outbreak of a probable war, for there are occasions when the buying of horses causes panic, and is indeed almost equivalent to a declaration of war. The French experience at the time of the Luxembourg scare of 1867 shows that it is necessary to disabuse our minds of the hope of being able to improvise resources in this respect at the moment of need. It took the French six weeks to find even the comparatively small number of horses which their then army needed; and the moment they had found them horse typhus and glanders broke out among the newly purchased horses, and they disappeared more rapidly than they had come. A melancholy satisfaction has accompanied the recent reduction of the horse artillery in that we have been assured that the horse artillery has been reduced to form train, because this at least shows that our military advisers have awakened to the fact that there is such a thing as train. Few indeed among them are aware of the amount of train which is needed. Now reserves are useful for train if you have reserves of horses, and although reserve men and horses may spoil good cavalry and good artillery, for train they are most excellent. The waggons in England would not perhaps present great difficulties, although the number needed is fabulously great; but the supply of horses is a desideratum of the future.

In all these matters our knowledge is of a theoretical rather

than a practical nature. When I talk with the young highly trained British officer I am sometimes reminded of what happened when the German military mission went to Constantinople. The head of the mission began his survey of the Turkish army by examining their staff college. "Give me your best man." "Here he is, general." "Good morning: kindly tell me what you would do if sent to order a small force, consisting of a squadron, a battery, and a battalion, to march to join your general, you being told to lead them." "——!" "Well, to whom should you speak? what should you say?" "Is it an offensive or a defensive march, sir?" "It is a march. I really don't know if it is offensive or defensive. If you meet the enemy in superior force it may be defensive; if you meet him in inferior force it may become offensive." "But, sir, the books teach us to distinguish between an offensive and a defensive march." And so on with many references to Jomini and Napoleon on the part of the glory of the Turkish staff college, and with increasing impatience on the part of the practically-minded German general, himself the most successful writer upon war of modern times, but a man who knew how war was really made.

The ideal of defence being that the capital of the Empire, the dockyards and arsenals should be protected against attack, the great commercial ports protected against ransom or bombardment, the coaling-stations protected throughout the world, and at least a small highly equipped force in a condition of readiness to strike one of those return blows without which defence cannot be efficiently conducted, we

have now to consider how far we come up to and how far we fall short of the ideal. That we attain to the ideal of defence is a view which may be dismissed from our mind when we discover that all who have spoken or written upon the question—including, of course, the economists and those who put in the first place the fact that we spend too much money, as for example Lord Randolph Churchill—proclaim with loud voice that we fall short in efficiency. I fear, however, that we must admit that we fall short upon every point—that the capital is not sufficiently protected against invasion, certainly not sufficiently protected to prevent a panic terror of invasion, such as would jeopardize the defence of our trade and of the outlying dominions of the empire; that our position in India is none too secure; that the fortifications and armaments of the coaling-stations are defective, as are also those of our own dockyards, while those of the commercial ports are almost non-existent.

Having considered in the first place our needs, and in the second our weakness; having asked in the introduction what we want and in this chapter "Have we got it?" we shall have in future chapters to consider "How to get it." In the treatment of this question of the remedies we shall have to reflect together upon the elements of strength for war, and to look briefly at the constitution of an army of the modern type, the attainment of which in England seems impossible. Failing the possibility of our adopting such a system, we have next to ask ourselves whether it is hopeless to expect that we should be able to adopt one of the modern militia systems, such as that of Switzerland or Canada. I do not

name the United States because, although that country has a regular army and a larger force of trained militia, as well as a nominal national guard of eight millions of men of military age, the defects of the present militia system were too clearly brought out in the discussion, at the Military Service Institution of the United States in 1885, of a paper read by General Sherman, to induce anyone to look in that direction for a model. On the other hand the Swiss can place in line on their frontier 200,000 men in ten days, armed with repeating rifles and supported by an excellent artillery, and a system which can do this cheaply is worthy of no mean regard.

Our North American colonies must also be considered. The Canadians, in addition to an enormous nominal militia force, keep up a real force of nearly 36,000 men, consisting, according to English and Canadian critics, of excellent troops, but weak in the numbers of their cavalry and artillery as compared with their infantry, and too weak in numbers altogether to resist a sudden American invasion. Major King, of the U.S. Engineers, in a paper written by him in 1884, assumes that in the event of war with England the American forces would occupy "the Canadian peninsula north of Lake Erie, . . . at the very outset of the campaign." In the event of war men would come forward in great numbers; but Canada would be short of trained officers. There is not a sufficient store of weapons in the country, and the capture of Quebec would mean the loss of the small-arm ammunition factory. No nucleus of transport is kept up in Canada. An able American writer

who has lately discussed "the mobilization of the Canadian militia" has pointed out that in the event of war Canada can expect little or no help from England, which would be sure to be menaced by Russia, and to need all her troops for India and for home defence. This writer thinks that as matters now stand the Russians would be able to capture Vancouver. He assumes, however, that Great Britain would be forced to keep her fleet entirely at home and in the Mediterranean from fear of France; so that what he is really assuming is an alliance between Russia, France, and the United States against England, which, although no doubt possible, is not a probable contingency. Unless England were menaced by France she could of course send a fleet into the St. Lawrence and take part in the defence of Quebec, as well as prevent any possible danger of the occupation of Vancouver by the Russians. At the same time, if it is assumed that, by any means whatever, Canada is left to her own devices to resist invasion by the United States, it must be admitted that she would be unable to do so, unless she should take steps in time of peace to largely increase her artillery and cavalry and to organize a permanent transport. The American scientific writers who have discussed the Canadian position point out that a complete mobilization of the Canadian militia would take two months, whereas the United States could rapidly assemble a large force which would be sufficient to occupy Montreal and to paralyze the Canadian railroad system. A Canadian writer who has discussed the same subject in the pages of an American military magazine concludes his survey in these words: "Canadians will fight,

and fight well, whatever the disparity of numbers ; but without preparation, organization, and a sufficiency of warlike stores, strong arms and warm hearts are of little avail." It would seem, then, that the state of things in Canada, as regards the possibility of invasion, is not unlike the state of things that exists in England.

It is obvious, however, that our situation is wholly different from that of Switzerland and of Canada, which are called upon only to provide for their own defence. If we were to adopt the Swiss or the Canadian system it could only be for home defence, and we must have a separate army for the defence of India, Gibraltar, and the coaling-stations, as well as for any counter-blows to be delivered by an expeditionary force from a maritime base. It is clear therefore that, if we are to follow the Swiss and Canadian precedents, we can only do so partially in this country, and that our army must be one of a composite type.

I have several times stated my belief that in any reform of our military system we should try less to create a servile copy of the army of some other Power than to strike out a new national system for ourselves. There has been too much imitation of foreign Powers already. From the Crimean War to 1866 we imitated France : from 1870 we have been imitating Germany, and this under circumstances so peculiar that there is less excuse for either of the imitations in our case than in the case of any other Power.

Although I am willing to assume that we shall never adopt conscription in England in any form, foreign writers who have made the most careful examination of the question

all take, I must admit, a different view, and the able German author of *The Nation in Arms*, General von der Goltz Pasha, is confident that we shall not long avoid the adoption of the principle of compulsory and even of universal service. It must be remembered, however, that not only are there religious and commercial reasons, almost peculiar to England, which make the non-adoption of conscription certain, but that English peace service is of so special a kind, being chiefly Irish, Indian, or Colonial service, that no other Power except Holland would have so much difficulty in applying the principle of universal service to its military affairs; and Holland, while she has a rudimentary form of conscription for home service, has a wholly separate army for Netherlands-India. France, moreover, has been obliged to commence, and will probably carry further, the creation of a separate army for Tonquin and Annam; and other nations are contemplating steps in the same direction. It is clear that if ever compulsory service were adopted in England it would be for home service; but there is no difficulty in England in recruiting a large home-service force of volunteers, and hence we find additional reasons in these latter considerations for doubting the necessity of even arguing the question of the adoption of compulsory service in this country.



### CHAPTER III.

#### MODERN ARMIES.

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IN the two previous chapters we have seen how sadly the British army as at present constituted falls short of the requirements of the Empire. We have now to turn from the consideration of the present position of the army to that of remedies.

While no contradiction has been offered to any point of the indictment of the present confusion and waste, some critics write in general terms of what they call the "alarmist" character of my views. I might reply that I have tried to keep so much within the mark that I have not done full justice to the case against our present organization for war. For example, when dealing with the condition of that which we call our strongest fortress, Gibraltar, I simply said that were it to be bombarded by a cruiser there were only four guns mounted that could reply. I might have said, according to the opinions of some distinguished scientific officers who have served there of late, that Gibraltar might be bombarded with impunity without the possibility of reply. During the war between Chili and

Peru an iron merchant vessel armed with one modern 8-inch 12-ton gun of long range bombarded Peruvian towns from a distance of 8,000 yards. If a merchant vessel carrying a modern 70-ton gun, or even a 45-ton gun or a 25-ton gun, for the matter of that, were to bombard Gibraltar from the other side of the large bay, there is no gun mounted at the fortress which could defend the coal depôt or the shipping. Even the two 100-ton guns that are at Gibraltar cannot, as at present mounted, fire across the bay,<sup>1</sup> and there are guns which can be mounted upon merchant ships which could with impunity bombard and destroy the town and dockyard as well as the coal depôt and the shipping. Not only is this true, but also from a point on the Mediterranean side of the neutral ground the same operation might be carried on against the northern end of the town, the assailant firing at high angles so as to clear the shoulder of the rock. I believe that there is one muzzle-loading gun of an obsolete pattern half-way up the hill which could fire in the direction I have last described, but only one of much range. It would not be very difficult or very costly to strengthen Gibraltar by

<sup>1</sup> An attempt was made to disprove this statement, as recorded in the London papers of February 16 and 17, 1888. "FAILURE OF A HUNDRED-TON GUN.—During the recent visit of inspection of Generals Goodenough and Sir Lothian Nicholson to Gibraltar, special practice was made with the hundred-ton Armstrong gun, which is mounted in the Napier battery. A canvas target of the usual navy pattern was towed across the range by H.M.S. *Grappler*, and, after a scaling charge, one round was fired, missing the target and causing such a tremendous recoil that the hydraulic mountings and gun platform were seriously damaged. The machinery can only be repaired at the Armstrong Works, at Elswick, and several weeks will be required to repair the battery. It is considered that the breakdown was caused by the fracture of a valve in the hydraulic compressors at the first practice with the gun seven months ago."

placing modern long-range guns high up on the rock with mountings which would allow of an all-round fire, and admit also of firing the guns at extreme angles both of elevation and depression, while other guns could be mounted on the shoulders of the rock on disappearing carriages. The deficiency at Gibraltar is, however, only a specimen of the want of preparation for war that exists at all our fortresses and all our coaling-stations, and our fleet would have plenty to do at the beginning of war with a Great Power, and would hardly be able to spare ships for convoying the necessary guns to all parts of the world. These deficiencies in our preparations are well known to all our soldiers, and it is only want of money which is ever pleaded as a reason for not strengthening Portsmouth and Plymouth and Gibraltar as the French have strengthened Toulon and Brest or as the Italians have strengthened Spezia. As it is with our fortresses so it is with all points of our preparedness for war, and this in spite of the most extravagant military expenditure on our part that the world has ever seen on the part of any nation in time of peace.

Gibraltar presents us with another example of our deficiencies in the means of defence besides that afforded by the lack of modern guns. A gunboat is kept at Gibraltar which at the time of "scares" is directed to keep a look-out on possible enemies' ships passing through the Straits. This gunboat, on account of her bluff bows, can steam only six knots an hour. When she is sent out to scour the passage, and practically, owing to their width, to both watch and guard the Straits, as well as to give information, it is easy

to guess what is thought of her by the officers in command of the fast steamers of the Russian volunteer fleet.

Gibraltar thus armed and thus supplied with "eyes" is I fear only a type of many of our coaling-stations. We suffer indeed with regard to them from a certain inability to make up our minds as to the points at which we may have to operate and as to the lines of communication which our trade and convoys will have to follow. Sailors for example are mostly of the opinion that our communications with India will have to be by the Cape route. But it would not be pleasant for us to find at the beginning of a war that the enemy had captured either Ascension or St. Helena and fortified it as a coaling-station for themselves. Yet such a garrison and such a fortress, unprovided be it remembered with telegraphic communication, could not stand against any attacking force. Ascension and St. Helena are specimens of the places which we have been unable to make up our mind either effectively to retain or completely to give up, and the compromise which has been arrived at is indefensible from either point of view.

One point of my previous statements upon which some doubt has indeed been thrown, by the *Scotsman* newspaper, concerns the possibility of an invasion of Great Britain. I may reply to my critics that I am certain that the great authority of Admiral Mends could not be quoted in support of the doubts as to the practicability of invasion. I know the facts upon which the doubts are based—namely, the difficulty which we found in disembarking troops for the operations against Arabi in the first Egyptian campaign, though the preparations had been made a considerable time

in advance. But it is a well-known fact that, from our want of experience of such operations, several very serious mistakes were made upon that occasion. Our own disembarkation at Aboukir in 1801, in face of a considerable French force with guns, is an ominous fact. At the time, too, of the Boulogne flotilla Napoleon's troops could be embarked at the rate of 25,000 men in little over ten minutes, and disembarked almost as fast. We were singularly near invasion at the moment when Nelson's fleet was decoyed away to the West Indies, and Napoleon certainly expected, but for the return of the English fleet and action of Trafalgar, to have ultimately conducted a successful inroad. Those who have had to do with transport know that difficulties have been reduced by steam and the use of larger ships.

Among the many letters that I have received from correspondents there are some which express astonishment at my rejection of the possibility of compulsory service in this country. Some of my correspondents think that all difficulty would be avoided if the men were allowed to serve at their choice either in a force resembling the present volunteer force—that is remaining at their homes, receiving no pay, and meeting some of their own charges—or in the militia if they were poorer men. A fresh class of difficulties would arise, however, in connection with this suggestion, which could easily be represented as anti-democratic and as the adoption of "one law for the rich and another for the poor." No doubt the volunteer movement has shown that Englishmen can be made into good

infantry soldiers without being taken from their homes. But we do not stand in need of an enormous increase in the numbers of our volunteers. We undoubtedly need much increase in our special arms, but as regards infantry for home service and defence there is, as I have shown, no difficulty about numbers, and the necessity for conscription does not at this point arise. Now, for our foreign army even Sir F. Roberts unhesitatingly rejects it.

Many of my critics have thought that I gave too much space to answering a well-known writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, but it is difficult not to take some notice of very confident assertions, in direct reply to myself, made by a distinguished man. In his article, in answer to me, in *Blackwood's Magazine* for December, he tries to take issue directly with me upon one of my main points. To put the matter plainly and briefly, he thinks that we can best protect ourselves by a strict alliance with the Central Powers, whereas I think it probable that, when the day comes for the inevitable struggle with Russia for the possession of India, we shall find ourselves compelled to fight without allies. There is no conflict between these two opinions: they represent different points of view not of necessity antagonistic. It is enough for me, after the discussion which has taken place upon this matter, to merely name these differences without once more arguing the question, but I have seriously to complain of the misrepresentation of my views which has been made by the *Blackwood* writer in the course of his statement of the problem. He charges me, for example, with advocating, among other changes to be made for the

purpose of securing the defence of India against Russia, the "substituting of a plausible statesman who is 'out' for one who is in." I may confidently challenge the writer in *Blackwood* to quote from me one word which could indicate the shadow of a belief that any changes of persons in English politics, without that change in military preparation which both he and I are labouring to bring about, would affect the defence of India. He also entirely misrepresents me in saying that I have "tried to persuade us to leave the nations of the Continent to be trodden under the feet of the colossus because Russia, or, at all events, Russia and France together, represented a force so great that other nations could not resist them." I have never tried to persuade my countrymen to leave any nation to be trodden under the feet of Russia, but have merely attempted dispassionately to point out the change of feeling which has occurred in England upon the question of the defence by England of Constantinople and of Belgium. This change of feeling may be again affected by events, and, especially as regards Constantinople, by the increased power of a gentleman whom the *Blackwood* writer curiously enough styles throughout his article "*Count Crispi*," but it is a charge which, as it seems to me, it would be, in face of the facts I quoted, childish to deny.

The *Blackwood* writer shows the most singular partizanship in a sentence in which he states that he shall "continue to accuse" me, "in season and out of season, of party spirit" until I "acknowledge" a "fact" which has no bearing whatever upon my subject. This is that Mr. Smith is "the

one statesman who has really and heartily thrown himself into that cause," although what may be the particular "cause" into which Mr. Smith has thrown himself there is nothing in the sentence to show. If as I guess, without much support from the *Blackwood* writer's actual language, but from my general knowledge of his opinions, he means that what I am to acknowledge is that Mr. Smith was an excellent War Secretary, I can only reply that I think it extremely likely, from my knowledge of Mr. Smith, but that I am not concerned with the matter the one way or the other. I have to point out the extraordinary deficiency in our military position as compared with the money that we spend and as compared also with our needs, and whether those are right who think that Lord Hartington and Colonel Stanley were bad ministers and Mr. Smith a good one, or whether they are wrong, has nothing to do with the question. I have made no attacks on individuals, except indeed on those concerned in the recent reduction of the royal horse artillery, and for my strictures upon that action of these gentlemen I have very fully stated grounds. As a matter of fact, however, I should not like to cause any false impression by my reply to the *Blackwood* writer about Mr. Smith, and I may say frankly that I feel certain that Mr. Smith is one of those rare persons—real men of business in office. He is one of those men who, like Mr. Hibbert among the regular Liberals, and like Mr. Chamberlain among the Liberal Unionists, have carried into official life the hard-working business habits which have made English local administration and English commerce



what they are. Whether, however, Mr. Smith was specially fitted for the War Office is a matter as to which I have no knowledge, although I am certain that he most efficiently discharged the business duties of the post. I am concerned with the results of our system, not with parties or with men. The *Blackwood* writer indeed charges me with "vituperating or undervaluing" work which has been done "whilst Conservatives happened to be in power." I doubt whether a careful survey of my articles will show that as a matter of fact the work "vituperated" (whatever that may mean) has been chiefly Conservative work. I have criticized and shall have still more to criticize the whole result of a military system in England which has lasted for many years and to which both the political parties have contributed, and as regards the so-called reforms of the last two or three years I am not aware that there has been any special difference between the popular administration of the War Office by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman on the one hand, and its popular administration by Mr. Smith or its less popular administration by Mr. Stanhope on the other.

The *Blackwood* writer appears to me to have so completely misunderstood me that I can only take blame to myself, and think that I must have very imperfectly expressed my meaning. He speaks of me as having done my "utmost to expand our forces to the dimensions of the great Continental armies." I certainly can never have advocated a policy so entirely different from my own views. On the contrary, in the first article of this series I expressly stated that I should work upon the base which I found laid down for

us by Parliament and by successive War Ministers of both parties—the defence of the coaling-stations, the defence of India and of the United Kingdom, and the possibility of sending two complete army corps abroad as an expeditionary force. I am labouring to prove how terribly we fall short of this recognized minimum, and to suggest the means by which we can attain to it, and, at the same time, to demonstrate how enormous and extravagant is the expenditure by which we obtain the miserable results we can at present show. The *Blackwood* writer denies that he is the mouth-piece of Lord Wolseley, although he admits that he has had communication with Lord Wolseley as regards the first article, to which I was referring, and has quoted from a private statement by the Adjutant-General; but he is certainly a friend of that distinguished soldier. I would refer him to Lord Wolseley when he somewhat satirically asks questions as to means for “economically increasing the size of our army,” for Lord Wolseley has told us, in the blackest words, that we are in a most unsatisfactory position as regards our army, that there is no reason why a foreign force of 100,000 men should not take possession of London, and that he does not believe that we should remain in our present position a single day if the English public were told the truth. Lord Wolseley absolutely condemns our existing military organization, as I shall have to show, and considers that we are wasting enormous sums of money upon a bad army, and that these sums would suffice to give us a good one. Let me hope that the *Blackwood* writer may be convinced by the Adjutant-General, if I cannot convince him,

of the possibility of those sweeping reforms as to which he seems sceptical.

I am a little afraid of arguing with the *Blackwood* writer because he tells his readers at the beginning of a paragraph "We know what we are talking about": still, as he immediately goes on to discuss a question to which I referred in the *Present Position of European Politics*, namely that of the Chablais and Faucigny districts of Savoy (which he suffers his printer to call "Chatlais" and "Tancigny"), in such a way as to show that he does not understand it, I have my suspicions about the writer's knowledge of foreign affairs. But I am not here concerned with his statements except so far as they bear upon my present subject. As regards military questions pure and simple he certainly agrees with me upon more points than those upon which we differ. At the same time he, like many other distinguished officers, firmly maintains the view that India can be defended by assisting Turkey to attack the Russian lines of communication, that is by invasion of the Caucasus, and in this respect he goes contrary to the well-known deliberate opinion of the highest Indian military authorities of the present day.

There is something fine, something Roman in the best sense, in the calm way in which the British Government of India looks upon itself as virtually eternal. I have before me a document referring to an Indian railway, the interest of which is guaranteed by Government, in which shareholders are asked questions as to their wishes with regard to the nature of their stock after "the first day of January one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine." But it is not of

much use to issue documents of this kind without counting the cost to this country of the intention to hold India against all comers. There may be times no doubt when the pressure by Russia upon ourselves in India may be eased off by a dexterous diplomatic use of European alliances and complications, after the fashion suggested by the *Blackwood* writer, but it is impossible to secure that never at any moment shall we find ourselves face to face with Russia in a single-handed contest, and it is obvious that if India could be adequately defended by alliances in Europe we should hardly spend twenty millions sterling every year upon local Indian army defence as well as the eighteen millions which we spend in England. If the *Blackwood* writer felt sure of the truth of his own conclusions he would as a military economist advocate the reduction of a military expenditure so great as our eight-and-thirty millions. It is because he knows that the defence of India by alliances is not without a flaw that he would wish to see our vast military expenditure continue. But if we are contentedly to spend such fabulous sums while we are told by his powerful friend Lord Wolseley that we do not get full value for our money, then we have ceased to be the practical and business-like people that we were.

Having thus briefly mentioned new points, I have to enter upon the second portion of my subject, which concerns the remedies to be adopted to meet the uncomfortable position of affairs in which we find ourselves. Before I come to my own remedies, I should like to consider the remedies of other people. When Englishmen turn their thoughts to military questions they generally show that

they have what is called a favourite general. The two most successful English officers of our time are both men whose capacity for the organization of successful expeditions has been so well proved that it is worth considering with some care the view they take of the steps necessary to put us in a proper position of defence. I have already given the views of Sir Frederick Roberts upon Indian defence, but I have only briefly referred to his opinions upon the general question, and I have only mentioned with equal brevity the despair with which Lord Wolseley regards the present position of the army. What then are Lord Wolseley's suggestions?

Lord Wolseley is of opinion that our army for one reason and another is unable to move sufficiently with the times, and that the country is forced to pay for an inferior article a price that would be ample to give it a most efficient military machine. He thinks that our army is clumsily and badly organized, drilled on an obsolete system, and dressed in ridiculous and theatrical costumes, that its tactical instruction is far below what it should be, and that a large proportion of the superior officers are not fully competent to command in modern war. Lord Wolseley holds that, besides purely defensive operations, we ought to be able to strike a blow with a regular force of at least two army corps and a cavalry division, in addition to troops to protect the base and line of communication: the force to be complete in land transport and all stores, rapid in its mobilization, and ready to embark for foreign service as quickly as the transport could be furnished. This involves complete organization in advance,

every man being told off to his place, a largely increased supply of material, a large amount of regimental transport, and strong railway, telegraph, hospital, and other departmental services. Lord Wolseley thinks that as the numbers of our regular army are very small we should endeavour to use them exclusively as fighting soldiers, and that we should draw from the militia and volunteers what we require for non-combatant services. He thinks that in these days, when war is always declared suddenly, and, Continental Powers being always armed to the teeth and always ready, begun almost before it is declared, it is madness not to keep the garrisons of Malta, Gibraltar, Halifax, and Bermuda always complete, as the duties of the fleet on the declaration of war with a Great Power would be too heavy to admit of adequate convoy for scattered transports. Lord Wolseley would provide for Indian defence by an eight years' service, but he objects to the twelve years of General Roberts because he thinks that the private soldier runs down rapidly in health and strength after an average Indian service of eight years. He would compensate the army reserve for the loss which an eight years' service would entail upon it by a pretty general adoption of three years' service at home. Lord Wolseley objects to a separate local army for India, although the fact that he advocates an eight years' service in India and a three years' service at home makes his objection rather nominal than real. He has the old terror of the Company's troops, and thinks, as many officers think, that they were a dangerous body.

It is indeed a tremendous indictment of the present posi-

tion of our army that such a man as Lord Wolseley, holding the post he does, should think that we are paying an enormous price for an ill-organized force, and that for the same expenditure we might obtain a far more effective army. As far as numbers go I believe that he would be satisfied with a comparatively small increase: a thousand men of garrison artillery for home defence, fifteen batteries of field artillery for the same purpose, and ten thousand more infantry, virtually for India, less however to raise the numbers than to enable us to send out drafts of none but thoroughly seasoned men.

Sir Frederick Roberts, in his views of the general situation, starts from much the same point of view as that taken by Lord Wolseley, but while still frightened by the title "a local separate army for India," he does admit the phrases "our home army" and "our foreign army." Believing as he does that the battalions that are to feed battalions on foreign service must really be depôts, he would call them depôts, and not battalions. Sir F. Roberts seems, I fancy, to agree with the view of Lord Airey's Committee as to the revival of single battalions with large depôts. Just as Lord Wolseley would engage men for an Indian service of eight years or for a home service chiefly of three years, so Sir Frederick Roberts would engage men for a foreign service of twelve years or for a home service chiefly of three years. He would replace the present militia reserve, which is, as he points out, a small army reserve consisting of militia-men, and which is a source of weakness to the militia, by a real militia reserve, and he would create a true volunteer reserve. On the base which I have described, he would build up a

force separated into two grand divisions : a foreign-service army and a home army. He is clear that from a pecuniary point of view it would be better for India to maintain its own separate local army, but for various considerations he decides on the whole against it. He differs from Lord Wolseley in thinking it necessary to largely increase our cavalry of the line, and he thinks that our field artillery are much more short of the numbers required for defence than Lord Wolseley is ready to admit. On the other hand, he thinks that the volunteers can easily find a large force of excellent garrison artillery. Sir Frederick Roberts considers that the country is at the present moment greatly deficient in horse and field artillery and cavalry, but not because sufficient money is not spent, for he agrees with Lord Wolseley in regretting that our present military forces are not "on a footing commensurate with the amount of our Army Estimates."

Before I enter upon the discussion of my own remedies, I should also have been inclined to consider those of Lord Randolph Churchill, had he indeed explained to us what they were. In his speech at Wolverhampton, after pointing out that the British Empire spends fifty-one millions a year on her war establishments, thirty-one millions more than the German Empire, and twenty millions more than the French Republic, and is, as compared with those two Powers, in a state of utter and hopeless military and naval defencelessness and want of preparation, Lord Randolph Churchill said that he had a plan, but that he intended for the present to keep it to himself. Now I cannot think that it is an altogether patriotic course for the noble lord to keep his plan to him-



self, if he has one which would reduce expenditure and promote efficiency. To judge by his questions as Chairman of his Select Committee, he cannot have given much time or thought to the subject, because he made four or five mistakes such as would not have been made by him with regard to India or with regard to Parliamentary procedure. But his questions pointed in the direction of a militia which would serve for six months or a year and then be trained once in the course of a certain number of years. He has not indicated his views upon the subject of the Indian army, and it is quite conceivable that his plan is only the plan of those of us who have advocated a long-service army for India and the Colonies, and a long-service cavalry and artillery for Europe, combined with an extremely short-service infantry for European service. It is, however, I repeat, impossible to discuss his plan until we know what it is.

Now, for my own views.

The facts which I have produced in my two first chapters have shown that the United Kingdom is not in a condition to bear the burden of wars which may be forced upon her. We know on the contrary that all other European peoples, with the possible exception of the Belgians and of the Dutch (at home), are in the position in which we have said that England is not. They, indeed, base their ideas of preparation for war upon an entirely different foundation; but it is necessary for me briefly to examine the systems upon which other Powers organize their armies.

The first principle is that of universal liability to service, dating, indeed, far back in history, but in modern times only

introduced and brought into its complete shape by Germany after her great defeat in the Napoleonic era. Prussia has led the world in this particular, and she has been followed step by step by other nations, generally after they had experienced some terrible defeat such as she suffered at Jena. Universal service for the good of the country has for result, that the army is composed not of the mere waifs and strays of humanity, not of recruits driven into the service by sheer lack of bread, but of the whole manhood of the nation, including its best men of every rank and every stage of physical and mental development, except the lowest. Wherever there is a liability to general service there are rules for the exclusion of those who are greatly deficient in mental, moral, or physical qualifications. In some countries there is a backdoor of escape from full service for men of education. They pass certain examinations, pay for their own outfit and food, work hard in the army for a year, are then dismissed on passing another examination, and become available in war chiefly to officer the reserves. The intense military spirit and democratic instinct of France have always rebelled against this arrangement, and the privileges of education are now to be virtually abolished.

No doubt this agreement of the various nations to give general service makes it very easy for Governments to provide the men, but it does not make it easier in any sense to provide the organization; moreover, the number of men who can be trained is limited by the amount of money which can be spared to keep them while under training. The second great principle, therefore, is to have as few

men as possible under training at one time, and this can only be done by making the period of training short. Here is a principle to fix in the minds of the English people as that applicable to Europe, though it is inapplicable to the British dominions in the East: the longer the service of the soldier the fewer soldiers can be passed through the course of training for the same cost. If, as is the habit on the Continent, the army during peace is considered as a mere training school for war, the length of peace service should be strictly regulated by the time which is absolutely requisite to turn out an efficient soldier. All the men so trained are placed in the reserve, whatever be its name; and here again we see a principle which is little understood by the bulk of Englishmen. We have been so accustomed to consider as reserves such forces as the militia and volunteers, that the country seems to believe that a reserve force means one which is to be called out after the regular army, as such, has gone forth to fight the enemy. The system of Continental nations is very different from this. When a man has passed through his service in the ranks, which varies from two and a half years upwards in the case of the Continental Great Powers, he remains for some years absolutely at the disposal of the Government, and is sure to be called upon to occupy some place or other in the fighting establishment from the first moment that mobilization is ordered. Naturally those who are last from what may be called the military school are those who are youngest, most vigorous, have lost least of their military habits, and are therefore fittest to be at once amalgamated

with the regiments placed in the first line; but for a long series of years every man who has passed through the military training is not only liable to be called up, but will be certainly called up at once on the declaration of war to fill his place in the force embodied. It will hereafter be shown how feebly our English reserves represent such an organization.

We have now got so far as the procuring of the men, the training them in time of peace, and the passing them into reserves which are always available for war. I have next to remark that the units, such as battalions, or batteries, or regiments of cavalry, must always exist in time of peace, because it would be impossible to form them rapidly enough on the outbreak of war, nor would such quickly-formed bodies be at all efficient. From this follows the necessity of having all the main parts of such units complete in time of peace, though without the full complement of men; and as regards the bulk of the force, the infantry, with far less than that full complement. As a rule the strength of the battalion in time of peace is somewhere about half its war strength, and in some cases less. The full strength is made up at the moment of war by what is called mobilization—that is, the drawing to the units, whatever they may be, reserve men sufficient to complete them. There is much more beside this to be done on mobilization, and I shall speak of it presently; for the moment the point is to understand that the enormous forces capable of entering into war on the Continent could not possibly be kept up in their present condition of efficiency in numbers and train-

ing by any other means than by having short service for the men, small establishments in peace, with the power of calling up at once men from the reserve on declaration of war. Our interests, as a great empire holding the enormous dependency of India on the other side of the world, must oblige us to adopt a system differing from that of the Continent if we are to have the same army for England and for India, because India does not afford any means of retaining and occupying the reserve men at their own cost, and therefore mobilization in India would be impossible, seeing that there would be no reserves to mobilize. There is, however, no other known means so well adapted for producing rapidly on an emergency a very large number of soldiers trained for war.

Leaving for a moment all points except that of the production of men in their right places, there arises at once the question what is to be done with this enormous mass of soldiers, which exceeds in any great military state, say France or Germany, the bulk of any army that ever was put in the field or probably ever will be. Let us say that any great military Power can produce over two millions of men. Are they all to be put in the field at once against the same enemy? Certainly not. There is a limit to possibilities of this nature. The great forces of the military states are on the whole divided into two main portions which have different functions on the outbreak of war. The first and more important is the active army, which cannot be put in the field too quickly, because it is destined for the first strokes of war—for manœuvring and fighting

battles, either offensive or defensive, within a few days after the outbreak of hostilities. This condition of preparation has never yet been attained in England. There have been nominally organizations of army corps, but they have always been paper forces, inasmuch as not even the men and horses, to say nothing of the material required, have ever been ready for a sudden war. Now this is clearly a fault of organization. France the other day mobilized one army corps, and could equally well have mobilized all of her eighteen which are in France. Within six days the last items were perfectly complete for war, and were on their way to the place of concentration. Nothing short of this should be our standard of readiness when we pretend to speak of one or of two English army corps. France, as we have said, has eighteen of such corps within the country, and one in Algeria. Germany has eighteen and a half nominally ; but the most careful students of her preparations assert that her arrangements have enabled her for several years past to put in the front line in case of war twenty-one or twenty-two corps. She has not rested at even this high level. Germany has steadily increased her ability to call out men, and her means of mobilization, until she has arrived at a point where it would be possible for her to place an army in the field nearly double its nominal strength of eighteen and a half corps.

It is very important to understand that the vast field army to be mobilized and placed in the front line by a Great Power never suffers any permanent decrease during war. There are lines of communication to guard, fortresses

to be seized, and all manner of duties to be done behind every fighting army, but according to modern systems of war the active army of the first line has<sup>2</sup> nothing to do with any work of this kind. There stands behind it, and to a certain extent advances behind it, the remainder of that enormous mass of troops possessed by each of the military Powers. This is a very important point. When England sent a force into Abyssinia it was strong at the coast line, where no fighting was expected: with every day's march some portion of it had to be left behind to guard the lines of communication which are necessary for every fighting body other than a mere flying column. The result was that when the English army arrived at last in presence of the Abyssinian forces there was very little of it left for fighting purposes, and if King Theodore had, instead of defending his capital city, retired another 100 miles it would have been impossible to get at him, because the whole English force would have been spent in guarding its own communications. In the late Afghan campaign the same system necessarily led to similar results, and when we talk of fighting Russia some 600 miles from our frontier it would be well to calculate beforehand what force would be required to guard the communications of the fighting army at the front, and whence that force could be drawn. A German or a French army, whether it consists of one or half-a-dozen army corps, need expend no strength at all in the secondary work of communications, sieges, and so on; all this can be done by the troops which, though mobilized on the declaration of war, are not so

organized as to be pushed forward into the front line with extreme rapidity.

Before counting our two English army corps as the force available to strike a blow on foreign soil, we have to remember that if this be all it would by no means represent two army corps possessed by any other nation, because behind their two corps would be trained troops and behind our two corps none. Under such circumstances if an advance were made into an enemy's country one of the two corps would have to stay behind, and the fighting power would be halved. It is the same in India: we have 70,000 English troops, and a native army, the whole amounting to over 200,000; but this does not mean that even if the whole of these troops were trustworthy we could put 200,000 men in line for battle; on the contrary it is acknowledged in India itself that our fighting force, English and native, in the front line could not possibly exceed two army corps, if it even amounted to that number. Yet we have at home half a million of men bearing arms, and our expenditure upon military affairs in the United Kingdom and in India amounts to eight-and-thirty millions sterling in the year. By this time any serious reader must have discovered that it is not against the expenditure that I am protesting, but against the expenditure and its result when placed in contrast. If more money were required I am confident that the nation would be ready to give it so long as we could make sure of a result which would at all fulfil the military requirements of the Empire.

We have then for the military system of nearly every



European Power general service, considered as an honour, and a system of short service with small but numerous units in peace. These are increased, in size rather than in number, on the outbreak of war, from reserves the youngest of which will join at once the manœuvring army which is going to the front, while those older and somewhat more rusty will march behind the manœuvring army, guarding its communications, besieging fortresses that have been cut off, and doing many necessary military actions so as to leave perfectly free the fighting armies at the front. The oldest men of all, together with those too young or too little trained for active service, remain behind in depôts and garrisons until the exigencies of the campaign compel them to move forward as reinforcements, either for the fighting army or for what may be called the reserve army. Put shortly we have—First: the Field Army, consisting of all the regular army corps which have been mobilized and sent to the front. Second: the Reserve Army, consisting of the troops next best trained, which have for duty to guard communications, undertake sieges, and be always ready to give assistance when required. Third: the Depôts and Garrisons. The depôts usually contain men either not wanted at first by the field army, or too young or too little trained for it. They will all be available to fill up the gaps caused by war wherever the need is greatest, and they are becoming daily more fit to take their places in the fighting line. As for the garrisons, the tendency is more and more towards using for them part of those troops which have passed their best fighting days or escaped full training. These may be called territorial troops, and are

not as a rule expected to serve out of their own country. Almost the only episode in the Franco-German war which shed lustre on the French arms was the defence of Belfort, and its garrison was largely composed of peaceful men, swept in from the country and turned into soldiers for the occasion; but there were good regular officers to train and lead them.

The organization of the forces of a Great Power is a very elaborate affair, but it may be possible to explain with some clearness and in more or less general terms the main features of the organization of one military empire, and for that purpose it will be well to select Germany, which has not only led the way in the organization of modern armies, but has also had by far the greatest experience in the working of a system. Speaking roughly, it may be said that up to the introduction of the extra forces which began to be raised in the spring of 1887, Germany had of men capable of mobilization and more or less instructed in their military duties a force of rather more than three millions and a quarter. We see at once how immensely these figures surpass the number of men required to complete either the nominal  $18\frac{1}{2}$  or the probable 21 or 22 army corps. Each army corps contains somewhat over 35,000 men, besides officers, surgeons, &c., making a total of about 37,000, and about 10,500 horses: so that 20 army corps would contain in round numbers, besides 10 divisions of cavalry each about 3,000 strong, 740,000 men, and that, or something like it, would be the force immediately available to be placed on an enemy's frontier when war is first declared. The 750,000 to

800,000 men would however merely be the point of the lance, and behind them, available for various purposes, would be another two and a half millions of men, not all used at first or even mobilized, unless Germany had to fight two Great Powers at once, in which case the whole strength of the country would probably be drawn into the field, into garrisons, or into depôts. I am here speaking only of the German army as organized up to the end of 1886. We shall come presently to further developments.

The military law of 1874 laid down that service was obligatory on every German from 17 to 42 years of age, nor is there admitted any substitution or exoneration or complete exemption. Other laws have also laid down that one per cent. of the population may be kept under arms in time of peace, and the Budget has been for many years arranged on that principle. Although the country has the right to take its youth at the age of 17 years, as a matter of fact it does not take the bulk of them until they are 20; the contingent, as it is called, is incorporated at the beginning of November in the year when the young men composing it have attained the age of 20. As a principle every man comprised in that contingent owed until lately a service of three years in the active army, four years in the reserve, and five years in the Landwehr: that is 12 years altogether; after which, until the age of 42, he became a member of the Landsturm, which has since the Franco-German war been made much more available than it used to be for general service in the field. These were the principles of service, but in practice the amount of money which could possibly be spared would not

allow of the full training of all these men : for instance, the conductors of the train were only taken for six months of service : and here it is impossible not to be struck by the enormous waste of the process lately arranged in England by which excellent and perfectly trained batteries, some of the men of which have been as many as seven or eight years in the service and a few even more, will be broken up and made use of simply as ammunition columns. It is difficult to conceive of a more wasteful and expensive proceeding. Then again, a large number of German infantry soldiers are sent back to their homes after only two years in the ranks, and none of them except re-engaged men and non-commissioned officers remain the full three years. In the infantry they are dismissed to their homes immediately after the autumn manœuvres of the third year ; and as this proceeding leaves both room and money available for other purposes, a considerable number of men who would otherwise escape training altogether are at this time drawn to the ranks and given as much instruction as possible in the short time before the new contingent joins. Thus the bulk of the army has less than three years' service in the ranks, and the tendency is to reduce the term yet further.

When the men pass from the ranks of the regular army into the reserve they can by no means consider themselves free to be idle and lose all the military knowledge which they have acquired. During their four years in the reserve they are liable to be called out twice, for eight weeks on each occasion. Again, after they pass into the Landwehr they may still be called out twice for exercises 14 days in

duration. There was some stir at the beginning of last year when a large number of reserve men were called to arms for instruction in the magazine rifle, but Germany was strictly within her right and only following the laws laid down to govern her military organization. Unfortunately for the efficiency of the English reserves the Government cannot call them out for training; because the employers of labour object to having their workmen taken away for any purpose, even for providing for the safety of the country. It is evident that the number of youths arriving at the age of 20 alters each year in Germany, as elsewhere, as the population grows, but the number of the contingent to be taken is arranged beforehand for some years by law. In fact it is governed by the necessity to have only the legal number, which until lately was about 430,000 men, under arms at once in time of peace.

By the law which passed the Reichstag with such difficulty early in 1887 the peace-effective was increased by about 42,000 men. The measure gave larger scope for the arrangements of the Minister of War, and will produce during the next few years an increase in the active and youthful army of from 150,000 to 170,000 men. The youths of 20 years of age amount each year to over 430,000. The contingent taken is only between one third and one half even since the increase. It is found that a large number, say 40,000, have emigrated or in one way or another cannot be reached. Then there will be found of undersized or delicate men as many as 90,000 : a smaller proportion, perhaps 10,000, cannot be taken in peace because they are the sole resource of

widowed mothers or families which would otherwise be destitute. Then about 5,000 are taken for the navy, another 5,000 are one-year volunteers; and as many as 120,000 are passed by for one or two years in order to allow their constitutions to strengthen. Still all these men are available as a last resource in time of war if they can be reached. Those who are found fairly fit for the service, but are not incorporated in the active army for the time being, fall into what is called the Ersatz-Reserve. The best of them may be, and sometimes are, eventually taken for two years of service and then remain in the Ersatz-Reserve, the whole of which went until lately into the Landsturm at the age of 31 years. Thus we see that liability to service does not absolutely mean that every man so liable must necessarily serve his real two and a half years or nominal "three years" in the active army. A great many escape, but the Minister of War catches all able-bodied men at some time or other of their lives and gives them a certain amount of training, which exceeds that of our own volunteers. Every body of men suffers losses even in time of peace by death or disabling sickness, perhaps also by desertion and emigration. Taking account of these losses, the strength of the German army before the beginning of that gradual increase which will result from the law of 1887 might be put as follows:—

Active army . . . .	3 contingents originally 150,000 each .	439,000
Reserve . . . . .	4 contingents . . . . .	536,000
Landwehr . . . . .	5 contingents . . . . .	611,000
One-year volunteers .	12 contingents originally 5,000 each .	52,000
		<hr/>
		1,638,000

The Landsturm was re-organized and made available by a law of 1875, and we have to add—

Landsturm . . . . .	10 contingents . .	1,080,000
One-year volunteers . .	10 contingents . .	35,000
		<hr/>
		1,115,000

But even now we have not taken into consideration the Ersatz-Reserve, from which we get of partially trained men, some of them very well trained indeed,

First-class Ersatz-Reserve .	9 contingents . . . .	309,000
Landsturm . . . . .	{ 11 contingents coming from the Ersatz . }	306,000
		<hr/>
		615,000

Thus was made up a grand total of men instructed and available for mobilization amounting in round numbers to 3,368,000 men.

In England, as has often been stated, we have fully half a million of men; yet up to the present time we can only put one army corps in the field, if indeed we could do that; and though we are promised a second the authorities themselves shake their heads over the difficulties of providing it.<sup>1</sup> Germany on the contrary can mobilize if she pleases the whole of her immense forces, and could put, as I have shown before, between 700,000 and 800,000 men in the field in battle array immediately, without any hesitation or loss of time; a number which could be rapidly and largely increased.

<sup>1</sup> In the debate on the Army Estimates, March 8th, 1888, Mr. Stanhope distinctly confessed that the first corps still lacked part of its proper equipment, and thought that the rest of the troops might be provided "without any great delay." Clearly the second corps is not nearly ready for mobilization.

I have explained that this state of organization, with its resulting strength, prevailed up to the beginning of 1887; and I would especially point out that the opponents of British military efficiency were in the habit of declaring that Germany only wanted a decent pretext for throwing off the terrible strain of universal service. The opportunity was given to her. The request for an increase of the peace army by 42,000 men annually was refused by the Reichstag, and an appeal was made to the people, who could then show what sort of feelings they entertained on the subject of national military vigour, with its corresponding expenditure. The result was a strong majority for the Government, and the increase was soon voted. The result as calculated by the French Head-quarters' Staff at Paris, and published by its organ, the *Revue Militaire de l'Étranger*, was shown to be that, taking all the men of whom the German War Office has a right to dispose, and has already trained more or less, it would be possible to place in the field or in garrisons and dépôts a force of no fewer than 3,600,000 men: of these, 1,280,000 are so organized that they could be placed actually in the field on the frontiers of say France and Russia at the first outbreak of war. This field army would have 3,000 guns and 360,000 horses. In the second line and forming a field army of reserve could be mobilized another 950,000 men by about the twenty-first day after the outbreak of hostilities, and this force also would have its proper proportion of guns and horses. We have therefore as what may be called the immediate fighting strength of Germany, exclusive of garrisons and dépôts, that is to say



of home defence and the means of supplying the waste of war, no fewer than 2,230,000 men. To give some idea of what this means we have to remember that the whole of the French forces which could be placed on the frontier or near it in 1870 amounted to about 220,000 men. The German field army, if the French Staff are not mistaken, would have a fighting strength of more than ten times the French fighting strength in 1870.

We are not yet at the end of the resources of "a nation in arms." I have shown how immense is the number of men who are not passed through the regular army, yet might be available in case of war, were they but trained and organized as an army. During the winter of 1887-8 the preparations of Russia, and the manifest comparative weakness of Austria-Hungary, caused those responsible for the safety of Germany to face the question of having to overawe France and Russia together by a new display of force. Accordingly, proposals were laid before the Reichstag, and passed with unanimity, for a yet greater development, which should make the best possible use of all men fit to bear arms. The changes made by law are easily told. The whole period of service is extended by three years, so that liability to service remains until forty-five instead of forty-two years of age. The service in the Landwehr will be six years longer than it was; and the Landsturm will contain all able-bodied men who belong neither to the army nor the fleet, from seventeen to forty-five years old. The Landsturm will be divided into two Bans. The First Ban comprises those between seventeen and thirty-nine, and they

can all be called to the ranks, in case of danger, by the commandants of army corps and the governors of fortresses. The Second Ban of the Landsturm comprises Landsturm men from thirty-nine to forty-five years of age, and this portion of the military forces can only be called out by command of the Emperor. When this tremendous change was introduced, and some £16,000,000 sterling asked for to carry it out, the Reichstag were told, "No one will find these sacrifices too heavy when the independence of the Empire has to be defended." The bill was carried by acclamation; and I will now try to show what is its effect. According to the calculations of the French Staff the total number of armed men which can be drawn upon for all purposes will exceed 7,000,000. The "*Feld Armeen*," that is to say, the armies organized for immediate mobilization, subjected to all the arrangements required to place in the field the masses of men who will strike the first blow, are now as follows:—

## IN FIRST LINE.

Infantry . . . . .	1218 battalions.
Cavalry . . . . .	504 squadrons.
Artillery . . . . .	544 batteries.

All these put together make up in round numbers—

Men, about . . . . .	1,600,000
Horses . . . . .	380,000
Guns . . . . .	3,264

Out of the 1,600,000 men, about 1,440,000 will be combatants.

The second line, intended for the service of the line of communications, for coast defence, for siege purposes, offen-

sive and defensive, and for keeping the armies at the front complete in all respects, will amount to—

## IN SECOND LINE.

Men, about . . . . .	1,075,000
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It would be confusing to give the details of the different arms, because this second line includes so many different items, such as siege trains, railway troops, &c.; but we may rest assured that, whatever forces the Germans create, they also organize. The general result is, for immediate and more or less active purposes in war, a force of about 2,700,000 men, while there will remain behind in the country a still larger force liable to be called to arms, containing a considerable proportion of trained men. In making these calculations, the French Staff are careful to explain that wherever there was a doubt they have taken the minimum—for instance, in cavalry and artillery of part of the first line. They say, however, “*Il ne semble pas que l’on puisse descendre au-dessous de cette provision. Peut-être est-elle dépassée ou le sera-t-elle dans l’avenir.*”

Among other interesting facts with regard to this new departure, we have this: that, without using the bulk of the contingents of Saxony, Prussia proper, Posen, and Silesia, Germany could place immediately in Alsace-Lorraine a fighting army of about 1,280,000, leaving the rest of the field army to confront Russia. Such an army as this would, a little while ago, have been organized in thirty-five or thirty-six army corps, and at that figure the French reckon them. But it seems that the principle of economy in a poor nation comes in here and forbids the formation of so many

units. It is probable that there will be only eighteen army corps, but of an enhanced strength, consisting of three divisions instead of two, having as a rule about sixteen to twenty battalions. Thus each army corps will contain something over 70,000 men, arranged as sixty or seventy battalions of infantry and from 150 to 180 guns, with a corresponding proportion of other services. This must be rather annoying to those who toil painfully after this invention of "the nation in arms." Just as we are beginning to boast that one army corps is nearly ready, and a second in the embryo stage, we have thrust upon us the fact that, as military ideas are running now, our first corps is not an army corps at all, but only a half. I should not be at all surprised if our next step were to give up the title of "army corps" altogether, and go back to "divisions," which would afford more opportunities for reduction. On the whole, there would probably be quite as much joy in Parliament if Mr. Stanhope were to say that we had one division ready, and that there was little doubt that we could form another "without much delay."

In tracing, as I have now done, the German army through some of its late developments, my purpose has been to show how the empire of force is marching onwards without haste, without rest, and is moving on intelligent and intelligible lines. I also desired to show in a less technical form than is usual the actual strength and capability of a great European Power. It seems to me that very few Englishmen in civil life,—and, indeed, not many of our soldiers,—know what is really going on upon the Continent, or have the

slightest idea that the fighting army of Germany would, by her new law and the organization consequent thereon, amount to nearly two millions seven hundred thousand men, or that she would probably put in the first line at least twenty army corps, each about twice as large and powerful in every way as an army corps used to be. My purpose is no more than this, and has certainly not for an object, as one critic suggested, to threaten this country with a German invasion. Nor do I advocate turning Great Britain into a nation in arms, for I know how futile such a suggestion would be; but I do suggest later on in this book taking some steps towards developing the military resources of the Empire within the lines of the voluntary principle. We have neither power nor occasion for emulating Germany, but we ought at least to provide for our own crying necessities.

The method of organizing this enormous force possessed by Germany is based upon the great principle of decentralization. The country is divided into districts which are the same for recruiting, for the establishment of the army corps in time of peace, and for mobilization in time of war. In France there are also districts, or regions as they are called, and the only practical difference is that the army in time of peace has until lately been recruited generally from the whole of France; but France has in the same way as Germany its active troops in peace, who then go into the reserve, and finally into second reserves, corresponding with the German Landwehr and Landsturm. Of course, as a rule the soldiers who have served their time in the active army go back to their homes. There are more "reservists"

who have to come from different parts of France than is the case in Germany: but the bad system of 1870 has been changed, and each man finds his equipment with the corps which he has to join. Even the system of recruiting generally for each army corps has been modified of late years, and the French system tends towards a nearer approach to that of Germany.

I have said that there are some exceptions to the rule of district recruitment and mobilization in Germany. For instance, Alsace-Lorraine remains so strongly French that it is found impossible to form a trustworthy army corps from the population. The recruits from those districts are used up in other army corps, and the frontier is garrisoned by troops not recruited in the conquered territory. This is an inconvenience to Germany, but it has served to show that the great military system of the State is capable of modification. After the conquest of Hanover no such necessity arose. The Hanoverian corps was organized at once in its own district, and did good service in the Franco-German campaign. The inability to act in the same manner in Alsace-Lorraine is a measure of the strong anti-German sympathies which continue to prevail in that territory. Again, on the Russian frontier there is a special German organization by which the garrisons are not dependent on the mobilization of any army corps. They, like our Indian army and like the German troops actually garrisoning the French frontier, are always nearly ready for war, and become quite ready immediately after the outbreak of hostilities. Again, in Germany, and nearly every other great military state, the bulk

of the cavalry is always kept upon a footing which is practically one of readiness for war. The whole of the German cavalry could march the day after mobilization was ordered, and we saw in the mobilization of the French 17th Corps that its cavalry could do the same. The horse artillery is also kept up almost on a war footing, in order that it may join the cavalry with great rapidity. The field artillery is more difficult to mobilize on account of the immense number of horses required. Economy forbids the keeping up of all the batteries on anything near a war footing in time of peace; still the means taken to provide horses are such, both in Germany and France, that the field batteries are equipped with their full complement of guns, men, and animals, so as to be ready to march with the infantry. In time of peace, for the sake of economy, the German field batteries have as a rule only four guns horsed instead of six; but lately Germany has shown herself rather anxious as to the working of this system, and a large number of batteries have been raised from four to six guns. In all cases the full number of guns are present on the spot: they are never sent away to far-off arsenals, as the extra English guns were when the late lamentable change was made. If a four-gun battery is to be mobilized in Germany or France it has its additional two guns under its hand, together with all the carriages required, and a system by which the supply of reserve men and horses takes place within a few hours. It is therefore monstrous to quote the German system as having been followed in the case of the late reductions in England. With us, a full complement of guns is not present with

the batteries, nor are the reserve men, and in spite of Mr. Stanhope's recent promises there is as yet no system of any description for the supply of horses.

The few words which I now say about mobilization will explain, though I shall have to recur to the subject, how it is that the War Office at Berlin is relieved of all risk of confusion, and even of the necessity for taking special measures at the outbreak of war. It has been said with truth that the Minister of War has only to touch a bell and order the mobilization of the whole German army. This is practically true, for the simple reason that every detail has been worked out in peace and that none of the headquarter officials have any measure whatever to take. The order goes out for mobilization, and the responsibility then falls at once upon the generals commanding the army corps and the districts in which they are quartered. Every rowing-man knows how in a well-trained crew, whatever the excitement and even terror of the individuals before the race begins, these disappear at the "gun" or at the word "Off." So with the German Staff in the case of the outbreak of war. All the anxiety has occurred in time of peace. Every year modifications are made in the plans of mobilization; these plans are most carefully gone over by the authorities at headquarters, and brought into harmony with the number of men actually alive and trained, with any changes which may have been made in the distribution of the frontier troops, and with the probable objects to be obtained by the mobilization.

After mobilization comes an almost more important work,



that of concentrating the armies in the positions which they are to take up for war. Here again there is no cast-iron system. I am told by an officer who has visited the "Great General Staff" at Berlin that on his asking where Count von Moltke kept his plans for the different wars that might happen, the answer was, "In his head." No strict plans of campaigns exist upon paper, only plans of mobilization and railway arrangements for concentration in certain directions. There is no unchangeable plan even for these. When France declared war in 1870 the Germans believed that no Government could be so reckless as to force a quarrel without having had some definite plan of invasion. The German official account of the war tells us that the first arrangements made by the General Staff were to concentrate on the French frontier: while this movement was being worked out the French army was discovered to be massing on the German frontier, and whatever indication there may have been beforehand of French weakness it was considered inconceivable that France should not be able to invade Germany at all. Therefore, while the movement of concentration on the frontier was in progress it was arrested by an order from the General Staff, and the German forces were directed to concentrate not upon the French frontier but upon the Rhine. Some of the troops actually left their railway trains behind the Rhine, but at that moment it became evident from many signs that the French army was in a state of dire confusion and perfectly incapable of taking the field with offensive energy. Acting then upon the principle that the offensive is always the best policy, the Head-

quarters' Staff cancelled its second plan of concentration on the Rhine and ordered the army once more to draw itself up on the French frontier in readiness to invade. Englishmen should mark the difference between the foes. In France the whole attention of the War Office and the staff was taken up, as it would be taken up with us, by replies to innumerable telegrams, each commander of a division asking the War Office directly for something he had not got and without which his command was unfit to take the field. Even the commanders of depôts and of garrisons such as those of the seaports were in the greatest difficulties, not knowing what to do with the reserve men who were pouring in shoals upon them, without even so much as knowledge where their regiments were. This was the effect of centralization. The German military authorities could sit still and think, and alter the march of armies, because they had not to deal with a single detail which had not been regulated during peace. This is the effect of decentralization. Since that war every nation in Europe, with one exception, has carried out the principle of decentralization, and that exception is Great Britain. I am aware that the new plan of mobilization proposes decentralization and readiness of carriage and stores. So, however, did the old scheme, and I cannot but have doubts whether the new proposals will be carried into effect.<sup>1</sup>

Having now attempted to sketch somewhat roughly, and in principle only, the methods adopted by Continental nations

<sup>1</sup> Since these words were originally published in the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Stanhope has confessed most clearly that the proposals have not been and are not being carried into effect.

and illustrated by the great type, the German army—having shown how the immense armies of the Continent are recruited, organized, and prepared to be placed in the field—I must say something of the training which both the troops and their officers undergo in order to turn out an army which is not only ready to be placed in front of an enemy, but fit to deal with that enemy in an intelligent and professional manner. Training has a great deal to do with the military question of England's organization, as we shall see when the British forces are treated in detail. Let us again take the German army as the type. Here we have to deal with a great monarchical system. In Germany, as everywhere else, it is recognized that two qualities are necessary for a good soldier: he must be both physically and morally fit for his work. Germany begins very early with the moral training; it takes its boys, sends them to school and inculcates there the worship of God, the King, and the Fatherland.

In his *Soldier's Pocket Book* Lord Wolseley shows how much is lost by English general officers because they do not arouse the enthusiasm of their soldiers. There is no reason why the English soldier should be treated as of so low a type that he has no idea beyond his belly. To treat him thus, as Lord Wolseley says we did in the Crimea, is to meet half way our Continental critics who call our army a mercenary force. Old habits are terribly difficult to throw off in English national life, and, because there was a time when service in the English army was so unpopular that gaols were emptied to supply recruits, we continue to half believe that the modern English soldier belongs to the

criminal population. But matters have immensely changed of late years, and especially since the introduction of short service and the great influence of the volunteer movement. The uniform begins to be regarded as a badge of honour, and if the baton of the field-marshal is not within the grasp of the private soldier, however well he may conduct himself, he is at least more honoured and more of a personage than he used to be. The idea to be inculcated in the soldier is that of duty, and there cannot be any doubt that by bringing to bear upon the British private the source of all real pride and honour in men not of the very highest and rarest type of mind, namely the effect of public opinion, his standard is being raised. Education is being extended, and few blunders would be greater than that of treating educated men as our great-grandfathers treated the offscourings of the gaols which were formerly poured into the British army. During the Peninsular War men were kidnapped as recruits, and very high bounties were paid for boys of fifteen. Wellington over and over again found fault both with officers and with men, and it is as certain as anything can be that the British army of to-day is greatly superior in every respect, except practice in war, to that which the great Duke led in the Peninsular campaign. Yet the historian of that campaign was able to speak even of the soldier of those days in these terms :—

“That the British infantry soldier is more robust than the soldier of any other nation can scarcely be doubted by those who, in 1815, observed his powerful frame, distinguished amidst the united armies of Europe; and notwithstanding his habitual excess in drinking, he sustains fatigue and wet and the extremes of cold and heat with in-

credible vigour. When completely disciplined, and three years are required to accomplish this, his port is lofty and his movements free, the whole world cannot produce a nobler specimen of military bearing: nor is the mind unworthy of the outward man. He does not indeed possess that presumptuous vivacity which would lead him to dictate to his commanders, or even to censure real errors, although he may perceive them; but he is observant and quick to comprehend his orders, full of resources under difficulties, calm and resolute in danger, and more than usually obedient and careful of his officers in moments of imminent peril. It has been asserted that his undeniable firmness in battle is the result of a phlegmatic constitution uninspired by moral feeling. Never was a more stupid calumny uttered! Napoleon's troops fought in bright fields where every helmet caught some beams of glory, but the British soldier conquered under the cold shade of aristocracy. No honours awaited his daring, no despatch gave his name to the applauses of his countrymen, his life of danger and hardship was uncheered by hope, his death unnoticed. Did his heart sink therefore? Did he not endure with surpassing fortitude the sorest of ills, sustain the most terrible assaults in battle unmoved, overthrow with incredible energy every opponent, and at all times prove, that while no physical military qualification was wanting, the fount of honour was also fresh within him!"

In this splendid passage, bits of which are often quoted, while the whole is but little remembered, two points are to be remarked on which more will have to be said hereafter. First, Napier estimates the British soldier as a man of great capacity under the conditions which then prevailed, and he evidently considered that under other conditions it would be possible for him to rise to even a higher scale morally if not physically. Secondly, he names three years as the time required to bring the British soldier into the condition of complete readiness for war; and in so speaking he was in advance of his time. If hereafter I advocate a shorter service than is now considered desirable, there will be this to be said for my contention, namely, that at the instant of the greatest trial which English armies could have to encounter

when their soldiers were opposed to the veterans of France and well-trying Marshals of the Empire, the historian of the Peninsular War considered three years a sufficient time for the training of soldiers who had to stand so terrible a strain. It has been shown that although "three years" is named as the period of the German soldier's training in the ranks of the active army, he in reality does not remain so long. Yet any one who talks to German officers on the subject of their men learns from them that they do not consider the average German as the best material of which to make a soldier. In spite of the general education which prevails, the greater number of the men in the ranks are not sprightly like the French. Neither are they born fighters like the English, Irish, or Scotch. German soldiers require a great deal of training before they can be counted upon as thoroughly fit for war, yet their training only lasts at the most about two years and three quarters. The economy of a poor nation forbids a longer time of service, and in consequence the training of the German soldier during his period in the ranks has to be devoted almost entirely to preparation for war. No doubt the British public will say, "Of course all soldiers spend their whole time in being prepared for war." By no means. On the contrary, the British soldier of to-day, and still more the British soldier of ten years ago, has been prepared much more for the shows of peace than for the work of war.

The German system of training has, like German organization, been followed more or less closely by all the other Powers. When the recruit joins, towards the close of the

year, he is as a rule a rather stupid and unwarlike creature. He has not even the proper control of his limbs, and this control is one of the first items of knowledge to be imparted to the soldiers of every nation. The ordinary joke is that the recruit never knows his right foot from his left, and that it being useless to say to him "right," or "left," hay has to be put in one shoe and straw in the other, and the word given thus,— "hay," "straw." The control of limb is given by what is called drill, beginning by the exercise of legs and arms, and going on to the rhythmical movement of smaller and then larger bodies of men, and thence to the handling and use of arms. The soldier passes through a training which brings his body more under the control of his will than it ever was before. This is and must always be the first stage of instruction; but the Germans, and following them all other Continental nations, continue this course of training no longer than is absolutely necessary to effect its purpose. After that comes the training of the mind for the soldier's duties. Here we have another great principle involved. As we ascend from the obsolete military rules of the last century to the latest developments of the art of war, we find a steady movement in the direction of allowing freedom to the soldier, and this combined with the strictest discipline. Every individual man is carefully taught that upon his special exertions and even judgment may depend the issue of some crisis in the struggle for the safety of the Fatherland. Moral and tactical training go hand-in-hand. So soon as the ordinary drills are completed soldiers begin to be taught, in small groups,

the best way of facing an enemy and obtaining an advantage over him. No more iron discipline exists than that which prevails in the German army, and its officers will tell you that there are no soldiers who require it more than do the Germans; yet in the face of this iron discipline, and even in accordance with it, the greatest individuality is inculcated.

In its system of tactics the German infantry works by small bodies, beginning even from what is called the group under a non-commissioned officer, and that group is tactically trained as thoroughly as the division or the army corps. Every German non-commissioned officer is taught to consider himself a leader of men, not only in the barrack-room but on the field of battle; nor does the captain of a company allow his recruits to work in line with the rest of the company until they have been instructed in the tactical duties of individuals and of groups. So soon as knowledge of this kind has been attained, the captain practises his company in all the phases of war. Such an order as was issued last year in England, after the inspections, finding fault with the English army for its want of elementary knowledge in such tactical work as the placing of outposts, patrolling, and, generally, the minor tactics of war, would have almost caused German officers to commit suicide; for in this, as in the general organization, responsibility does not merely lie at head-quarters, but descends through all the ranks of the army, through colonels and majors and captains down to the last subaltern and even to the non-commissioned officer. I shall speak of the training of the officers presently; the point now to be fixed in our minds is that the German soldier is



told to consider that the safety of his country may depend upon his individual bearing and intelligence in war. Perhaps it may need a British Sedan to force this ideal upon us, but if it has not yet been accepted as an English maxim, we are the only people in Europe who do not accept it.

After a thorough training of the company within itself in all the minor tactical duties, the commander of the battalion, who has hitherto inspected the work of his captains, takes up his personal responsibility: companies are manœuvred against each other, and the whole battalion is made to work against an enemy either "supposed," or represented by small bodies of men. Colonel Lonsdale Hale has lately pointed out how to train troops in tactical knowledge without requiring either many men or large spaces of country. The Germans do it, and the French and Russians have thrown themselves with vigour into the same line of work. After the battalions have been thoroughly trained the responsibility of the brigade commanders comes in: each brigade is worked in the same way and for the same purpose as the company was first worked, and then the battalion. After the brigade comes the division: and finally the autumn manœuvres, when divisions and even army corps are handled against an enemy either "marked" or consisting of another equal or unequal force. Thus we have for the whole training of the army, first the drills to get the individual soldier's body under command of his will; then the tactical work by groups; then by companies; then by battalions; followed by the tactics of brigades, divisions, and army corps. Exactly

the same kind of training prevails in all the Continental armies, and is accepted as absolutely necessary for success in war.

It is not difficult to see that all this training of the men involves an equal training of the officers, and the duties of a Continental officer are now extremely severe. At the beginning of his career he enters the service by one of various channels, but in every case after passing through some intellectual tests. He, like the soldier, or even more than the soldier, is encouraged to believe that on his knowledge and judgment may depend the issue of a great battle, and is from the earliest period made to feel responsible for the complete training and knowledge of his soldiers. He drills them and gives them their tactical training, but he does more than this; for instance, supposing that it is the intention to carry out practice in patrol duties or outpost duty the next day, the officers will collect their men in barracks during the afternoon and explain what is about to be done. They will put before the soldiers the reasonableness of the drills and tactical exercises, and try to make them understand why it is necessary that such and such duties must be performed. Next day, when the soldiers find themselves on the ground, they have some ideas as to what they are about to do, and while at work they are questioned by their officers, who explain to them the reasons for the particular actions they are called upon to perform. While the junior officers are thus teaching their men, their seniors are listening and judging them; not interrupting, because it is not well that the junior officer should be made

to "look small" before the troops. All through the summer tactical exercises the same system prevails. There are always the commanders of the company, the battalion, or the brigade at work teaching their men and their junior officers, while above them there is always the critical eye of the higher commander, who from his length of service and experience is supposed to have even more knowledge. These are the examinations for promotion in the German army. There are theoretical tests of various kinds for the officer who wishes to enter the staff schools or to attain other special positions, but, speaking generally, the examination for promotion is not made by books and cannot be crammed. That officer is considered deserving of advancement who practically knows the duties which have to be performed in war, and is able both to teach and to lead his men with knowledge and ability.

The same idea of practical tests is carried all through the service. Taking again the German army as a type, an officer of ability may wish to attain a position on the staff, which brings with it a more rapid promotion than ordinary regimental duties, and leads to the higher employments. Some of the candidates are trained in staff schools; some are selected on account of the ability which they have shown; but all who are worth placing on the staff have to go through practical tests. When an officer has passed through the Staff School, which corresponds with our Staff College, he has no more right to an appointment than if he had remained doing regimental duty; all without exception go back to their regiments. The General Staff at Berlin

sees the reports from the schools and sees also the special recommendations of officers who have not passed through the schools; guided by these, it calls up the best of the officers to Berlin and there sets them staff tasks to do; for instance, one officer may be given the task of disposing troops for obtaining the best information as to the French positions on an outbreak of war; another may be given as a problem the invasion of England, and perhaps how to get out of it again. When the officers have completed their tasks, they go back to their regiments, and no one knows for certain whether he will ever receive a staff appointment; but he has been judged by the abilities which he has shown. Some officers hear no more of appointments; others receive appointments on the staff, generally speaking with the troops, but sometimes at the General Staff Offices in Berlin. When the term of the appointments is over they again return to regimental duty, but, if their work has been good, with a step in promotion, and almost invariably to another regiment, so that there may be no jealousy among their comrades.

Here then we have the same practical preparation for war. An officer may be admirable at drill, his men may be the best dressed in the German army, and he may even have rank and an old traditional name; none of these things will avail him for employment on the staff or promotion: he must show his ability, and an officer who does show ability is absolutely certain of rising to important appointments and commands. This system is more or less modified in different countries to suit the habits of each nation; but it may be taken

generally that the Continental nations, always fearful lest war should come upon them, consider that every officer according to his ability must be trained for war and for war alone. They also consider that it would be madness to allow incapacity to find itself in positions of special responsibility. This is the great principle of selection, and of it that excellent judge of men, Lord Ampthill, used to say that in his experience he had known of two cases of the rule of almost pure selection by merit for important posts: they were the systems of the Jesuits and of the German army, and in both cases the system imparted such an extraordinary efficiency as was not to be found anywhere else. It is to be remarked that each nation must act in harmony with its political and social organization. In Germany, which is nothing if not monarchical, the whole responsibility for promotion is in the hands of the Emperor himself. No doubt he is advised by his staff, but he does sometimes exercise his own personal discretion. It is in his power to promote without advice from any one, nor was there a single personage in the country, not excluding Count von Moltke, whose opinions and whose decisions were more thoroughly trusted than those of the late Emperor, who lived the life of a soldier and accompanied Prussian armies in war from the time he was a mere child up to that period when, at the head of the German army beleaguering Paris, he assumed the purple of the Empire of Germany.

This then is the system of German instruction and training, and it extends from the bottom of the army to the top. The officers are thoroughly professional men, and by nothing

but professional knowledge and intelligence can exceptional promotion be won or the highest responsible positions attained. But while insisting on thorough professional knowledge, the German system takes care that there shall be no mere stupid crystallization in certain forms of drills and exercises. This idea works in many ways; one of the most interesting is the way in which such examinations as exist are conducted. There has been for many years in England a controversy as to the best means of obviating the objections to cramming. The German method is very simple: instead of giving a number of questions and a text-book out of which the answers to these questions must be taken, it gives perhaps one or two questions and allows a long time for answers; but those answers must involve a large and general knowledge of the subject and, still better, original thought. I have lately seen the examination papers given to a one-year volunteer both during his service and at the end of it. They were very practical, and the time allowed to answer each question was generally forty minutes. This usually included the time for a rough sketch illustrating the answer required. The questions for officers aiming at staff employment are naturally more searching, but the same principle prevails. It is remarkable that in the most strictly drilled and disciplined nation of the world there is the greatest veneration for and desire to produce original thought. I have been assured that in the examinations an officer may be forgiven if he shows an incomplete knowledge of his subject provided that his answers contain within them evidence of individual capacity.

It is considered better that an officer should answer a question wrongly but cleverly than that he should know all about it and yet show that he does not appreciate the life of the subject. From beginning to end of the training, both of officers and soldiers, the great idea is to develop their intelligence and to make them think, while impressing upon them the results which have been attained by other thinkers. I believe that the material of which the German army is composed is naturally no better than the average of the English officers and soldiers; but the training in the army so develops the general intelligence that the keenest critics will scarcely ever find either officer or soldier at fault in a difficulty. We shall see hereafter how far the same kind of professional training extends in the British army.

This immense organization, so recruited, so officered, and so trained during peace, must inevitably find during war the advantage of such preparation; yet it would remain after all a more or less incoherent mass, a body without a head, were it not for the care which is taken that every detail of its action should be regulated by the best brains of the country. German officers and indeed the officers of all Continental nations are struck with astonishment at the fact that we English, with a civilian Minister of War, continually changed, nevertheless have no great staff organization at the head of the army, acting as its brain and centre of nervous force.<sup>1</sup> The German army has its War Office, which is con-

<sup>1</sup> Since this was first published there has been a certain change by which the military authorities have somewhat more power, but there is still no chief of the staff, and no organization to compare with the "Great General Staff" at Berlin.

cerned in matters of administration and supply. The Minister of War comes between the nation which grants means and the army which expends them. It cannot be said that in Germany he is responsible to Parliament because the great German officials rather govern Parliament than are governed by it. But we may take the case of France as an example of a not only republican but thoroughly democratic nation. We see there admirable debates whenever any military measures are proposed, provided that they touch in any marked way the national character; and, because France, like Germany, is always on the watch and anxious lest war should break out, we find Parliament making extraordinarily little difficulty as to granting the supplies required. So, too, in constitutional Italy. It may be and no doubt is true that on the whole the bulk of the French and of the Italian peoples desire peace, but I do not notice that cutting down the Estimates and reducing the efficiency of the army are popular. France and Italy have no Lord Randolph Churchill, and were any politician to adopt the line which he has adopted in this country he would fall into unpopularity as an enemy of the State. Even in Austria, a poor country and one in which it has been necessary to practise the severest economies, no Minister or serious politician would dare to go to the country with a mere cry of cutting down the Estimates. If money is badly spent Continental nations know whom to hold responsible, but they would consider it sheer madness to refuse to protect themselves by a thoroughly organized military force. The German War Office then occupies this responsible position,



that it tells the country the amount of money required and distributes the expenditure in the wisest manner. It is well understood that everybody, from the highest to the lowest, is keenly desirous of both efficiency and economy. There is therefore no feeling against the spending departments as such, and there is a very large trust of the officials who have the management of those departments.

The German Minister of War, soldier though he be, has not the responsibility of planning campaigns or deciding on any strategical or tactical changes: these are the functions of the "Great General Staff" over which Count von Moltke presides. It is the brain of the army and a brain which is always at work, and employs some sixty officers besides those who manage the surveys and military railway business. The whole number is about a hundred and fifty. In this department, which has become the admiration of the military world, are to be found all items of knowledge which can possibly be required for undertaking campaigns in various countries. Like all German military work, the work of the Great General Staff is thoroughly done. All the facts which come to the knowledge of any department of the Government find their resting place here; and there is never a time when German officers employed secretly by the Great Staff are not perambulating every foreign country and picking up what new information can possibly be gained. We know that in the Austrian campaign of 1866 the German army was so well informed that it knew the exact breadth of rivers at the points selected for crossing. So thoroughly had Paris been studied before 1870 that the

German artillery was able, without any fresh reconnaissance, to know what curve must be given to its shells in order to strike the right place in the escarps of the forts, even when those escarps could not be seen. An English officer who has inspected the Great General Staff and its work informs me that in the fourth section he was asked by an officer what was the exact strength of a certain native battalion in India. The German officer said that he had the strength of all the rest for that year, but could not ascertain the exact number of men in this one particular battalion. The heads of some of these sections are permanent, good desk-officers, who will never be employed in the field in case of war. But the palace which contains the Great General Staff is full of officers of all kinds, who are not only studying and assisting, but having their own capacity tested as useful staff officers for the field. The chief, Count von Moltke, was not selected for any rank, station, or connection with the Court, but purely because of his well-known ability: and it is a proof of the practical nature of the work carried on in his department that he himself was able to design and carry out the sudden changes required for some of the greatest campaigns in Europe, he being an officer who has done comparatively little duty with the troops except that of directing operations in war. He had however shown great mental capacity, and his brain was one of the elements of success possessed by Prussia in 1866 and 1870. When he dies his spirit will survive in the many brilliant staff officers whom he has trained.

It is evident that all this admirable but high-pressure

training of the officers cannot be carried into daily life without offering to them some inducements to live laborious days. The pay of the officers is less than in our army, but it is greater considering the general wealth and standard of living in the two countries, and considering also the respective pay of the men. It may fairly be said that in England the private soldier can not only live on his pay but can, and by the system of deferred pay must, make savings. The British officer cannot well live upon his pay, and falls into debt if he tries to do so. Society will not permit officers to live penuriously, and all the expenses of messing and hospitality are practically dictated by society. In Continental armies, especially that of Germany, the case is reversed. Officers can and do live on their pay in a large number of instances; the soldier is dependent for all his comforts on the contributions of his friends. But there is a still greater attraction to the commissioned ranks of the German army. The profession of arms is considered the most honourable of all, and carries with it great social privileges. All the Imperial family habitually wear uniform. Prince Bismarck himself is a soldier, and military rank takes precedence of wealth and even of unmilitary talent, for the functions of the soldier are considered the highest of all. I do not of course advocate anything of this kind for England, but the difference must be considered when we compare the inducements to work offered to English and German officers. In Germany the commission is a provision and a certain avenue to distinction in society and the State; in England it is nothing of the kind, and

officers, who are out of pocket by their service, are apt to consider that they give, rather than receive, by entering the army.

In describing the general organization of a modern army and its staff I have selected the German army because it is the type upon which others have been modelled. One after another within the last few years the various nations of Europe have more or less imitated Germany, both in her main military principles and in the organization of that military nervous system—the General Staff. France in particular, since the war of 1870, has completely remodelled her whole army. By the adoption of general service she has produced an enormous number of trained men: her officers have been educated in the same practical manner, and above all there has taken place a complete re-organization of the General Staff. France has even moved in advance of Germany in some respects. There is now issued by the French Staff a fortnightly publication which treats of all military events occurring throughout Europe. Every change in foreign armies is carefully studied and reproduced in print with extraordinary fidelity. There is perhaps no military publication which is of such value to students of foreign armies as the *Revue Militaire de l'Étranger*, which is issued by the second bureau of the French General Staff.

It is hardly worth while to go into the details of other armies which are straining every nerve to keep step with the giant strides of German military preparations. Suffice it to say that the French Staff, knowing what is going on in

Germany, proclaim themselves to be ready for a campaign, trusting, as they in a measure do, to the delay which would be occasioned by their fortresses. Austria and Italy are considerably behind either France or Germany, Italy being very backward in her arrangements for mobilization; but both continue to increase their forces to a large extent. Of Russia it is best to say that we know for certain comparatively little.

Her military organization gives Russia upon paper a vastly larger force than Germany; and it seems to be admitted, even by the writer in *Blackwood*, that Austria could not possibly face Russia by herself. Little as is known of the real value of the new Russian organization, this much is certain—her army is steadily growing. She adopted general service of short duration later than most of the other Powers. She is backward in civilization, in the construction of roads and railways, and, above all, in the force of public opinion. There is reason to believe that the corruption which always goes hand in hand with backwardness in the force of public opinion is still so prevalent in Russia, and especially in the districts far away from the influence of St. Petersburg and Moscow, that even the number of men supposed to exist in any regiment or district could not be found armed and ready in case of war. No doubt also the mobilization and concentration of Russia's armies against a great European Power would be slow and difficult, because of the want of means of communication, although, as against Austria, the marching power of the numerous Russian cavalry would in some degree remedy this inconvenience. Nevertheless,

Russia represents an enormous force which could be called into activity, and would at least produce one army after another in succession. The peculiarity of the Russian cavalry, namely, its training to fight on foot as well as on horseback, may be criticized, and may perhaps have some effect in reducing the vigour of its charges. The great English military authority of Sir F. Roberts seems to be in favour of a cavalry of this description, and it ill becomes the advocates of mounted infantry to speak lightly of a force which by recent changes possesses more than 200,000 combatants with the same number of horses, without including some 35,000 of what may be called a reserve of yeomanry. Suppose these horsemen, who are mounted on some of the hardest animals in the world, to be only equal to mounted infantry, it is at least something that such a force exceeds the whole of the army which France could place on or near her frontiers in 1870. Against Russian troops the veterans of Frederick the Great and of Napoleon struggled in vain. The battles of Zorndorf and Kunersdorf, the pursuit of Napoleon during his retreat from Moscow towards Germany, showed the indomitable courage and endurance of Russian troops. Nor is it probable that any other army could have crossed the Balkans in the winter of 1877-8, in the midst of snows, and under every circumstance of difficulty, or hurled back with the same rapidity the Turkish armies upon Constantinople, either defeating them or capturing them everywhere. There is a very great danger lest we in England should undervalue the enormous force of that somewhat incoherent but most remarkable organization, the Russian army, which

stands alone beside that of England in its power of enduring arctic cold and torrid heat. Marches are now among the most important of military elements of strength, and no other European army can march like the Russian. Whatever the conditions of a struggle might be between Russia and Germany, or between Russia and France combined against Germany and her allies, there can be no question that in Asia we have a rival of enormous force compared with the army which we could assemble to resist his advance. At present all circumstances are in our favour. The Russian, Siberian, and Central Asian railroads are not complete, and the quarrels of European Continental Powers make us for the moment comparatively easy with regard to that part of the world in which we also are a Continental Power. Time is, therefore, given us to put our military house in order. Let us take care that that time is not wasted.

We may now try to draw the moral for ourselves that is to be found in our survey of model armies and of modern armies in general. We have seen that each German district, of which there are seventeen (besides the Guard corps), could produce an army considerably greater than that which Mr. Stanhope promised as the whole movable force of England for the total enormous expenditure of our military estimates, and that German force is fully provided with everything required for mobilization, or has some definitely arranged plan for obtaining it at once.

The whole number of horses for the field armies would, by the system which prevails, be furnished immediately and without friction. The carriages are of different kinds. All

those which are of a strictly military pattern are ready in time of peace and placed exactly where they can best move towards the frontier on the outbreak of war. Besides these a number of country wagons are always used. They also would be requisitioned and at once available. When this country is told that it cannot put a few ammunition columns in the field without destroying for that purpose the whole of that nucleus of field artillery which would appear to be so necessary as an example, if nothing more, to the militia and volunteers, the conclusion becomes irresistible that some change in the application of our military budget ought to be made. If Germany can place in the field thirty-five or thirty-six times the strength of the old army corps against France, while retaining a large army to act against Russia, and yet leave a mass of field artillery behind; if, as is the case, every nation has field-guns not only for its mobile army but for the armies of reserve, and for the territorial troops which would remain behind on the soil of the country to which they belong, it must surely be wrong that we in the United Kingdom should base our organization on totally opposite principles. It cannot be a mere question of money, because England is richer than other Powers. I am persuaded that the country only needs to understand that a definite scheme has been devised for its safety by the authorities, and that the army is to be organized for certain well-known purposes, totally distinct from the provision of employment for younger sons. If the country can once understand this, and that the definite granting of a definite sum of money for a definite number



of years would produce efficiency throughout the army and place us in a condition which would prevent the existence of the perpetual feeling of uneasiness, and the recurrence of our frequent panics, Englishmen have not become so foolish as to refuse to grant the money. And this I understand to be the contention of the service members who so freely quoted me in their speeches of last March.

I have now attempted to show what are the general lines of Continental organization for war. They are chiefly these: 1st, personal service by all men, considered as a duty to the State and an honour to the individual; 2nd, short service and a system of reserves which as time progresses are being made more and more available for the operations of war; 3rd, local organization by which those reserves can be poured immediately into the ranks of the army corps then quartered in the particular locality or district; 4th, the permanent provision of all stores, including carriages, ammunition, and everything that can be required at the outbreak of war, these stores to be exactly where they would be wanted by the troops at the moment when they were called into the field; 5th, careful plans of mobilization so arranged during peace that not only will every man know his position in time of war, but that the whole responsibility will be removed from the central administration and devolve upon the authorities in the districts, who are at all times ready prepared, and trained to mobilize the force immediately under them; 6th, an organization for obtaining horses instantly on the outbreak of war; 7th, but by no means last in point of importance, the organization of a General

Staff which shall act as the brain and nervous system of the army, and shall draw to it and pass through its training as large a number of officers as possible, so that experienced staff officers shall be numerous in the event of war. To this General Staff is committed the responsibility of working out the schemes for mobilization, concentration, and for meeting in the wisest and quickest manner the plans of an enemy. The Staff is also charged with obtaining knowledge, by every means, of the condition, the projects, and the resources of every military State, together with information as to the features of all countries which may be considered as possible theatres of war.

It will certainly be said that England is not a military Power, and that we cannot pretend to base our army system upon the principles which govern States always expecting war and organized accordingly with a special view to preparation for sudden campaigns. This is in a measure true, and I am not disposed in the present chapter to say how much or how little we may borrow from Germany, France, Italy, Austria, or Russia. Let us pass on then and give a moment to the examination of one or two of the lesser Powers which have in some sense a different, and certainly a cheaper system. For instance, Switzerland is a country which is to a certain extent protected by other nations, because no one of the Great Powers would without fighting allow her to be absorbed by another. This little mountainous country, the playground of Europe, inhabited by free men with republican institutions, seems to have no possible cause of quarrel with any of its neighbours. Yet Switzerland

can mobilize a larger force than England, and, with a less complete organization than she has now, did actually in 1870 mobilize and place on her frontiers no fewer than five divisions more quickly than the armies of France and Germany could come into contact with each other. We may call her army militia if we will, but we are bound to recognize that it is far better organized than our militia, or than the troops with which the young French Republic first warded off the blows of the Central European Powers in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The present military organization of this sturdy little country dates from 1874, when more power of using all the forces of the cantons was placed in the hands of the Confederation. The cantons do recruiting work like the districts of the Great Powers; the Confederation takes charge of the whole in the event of hostilities. Every Swiss owes service to his country from the commencement of the year in which he becomes 20 years of age until the end of that in which he has arrived at the age of 45; but the young men are not actually incorporated till after their early training, so that, speaking accurately, the army only contains 24 classes. The recruiting is by districts, of which there are eight, corresponding with the eight divisions, and these districts are further subdivided into what we may call sub-districts, each of which has to furnish from one to three battalions of infantry. The result is a force of 215,000 men divided into the *Élite* and what is generally called in Europe the *Landwehr*. The *Élite* has 120,000 men, and consists of all within their first twelve years of service; the

Landwehr contains the older men, in number 95,000. The Élite can mobilize 105,000 men, disposed in 8 divisions of all arms, plus a regiment of mountain artillery and certain troops outside the divisions. The Landwehr forms 16 brigades of infantry and 8 batteries of artillery, besides a small force of cavalry, engineers, and other troops. For the training of the recruits there are Federal schools in full activity from May to November, training one batch after another. The time spent by each batch in its first training is as follows :—

45 days for infantry.  
60 days for cavalry.  
55 days for artillery.

42 days for train and artificers.  
50 days for engineers.

Afterwards there are trainings of repetition every year for cavalry, and every other year for the remainder; the infantry going out for 16 days, the cavalry for 10 days (every year), the artillery 18 days, the train 14, and the engineers, like the infantry, 16 days. The cadres—that is the officers, higher non-commissioned officers, and so on—are called out from 4 to 8 days before the privates. The Landwehr have only shooting exercises and inspection, and the total time which they are out is 30 days altogether. Taking the greatest and the least amount of actual service in the ranks, including the training of recruits, we find that an artilleryman is trained for 163 days in the Élite and 30 in the Landwehr, total 193 days, and the infantry soldier for 141 days in the Élite and 30 in the Landwehr, total 171 days. Now this may seem at first sight a very insufficient course of instruction, but to say nothing of the zeal for

instruction which the shortness of the training induces, there is a very important addition. The colleges and other schools organize schools of cadets, in which the boys are taught drill from the age of 10 years and shooting from 16 years. As a rule, the youths who are growing into men take part in the shooting of the numerous *Sociétés de tir*. The result is that the individual soldiers are quite ready to take the field, though the cavalry is inferior. As for the number of tactical units produced, there are in the *Élite* 106 battalions of infantry, 24 squadrons of dragoons with 12 companies—so-called—of Guides, 300 field and mountain guns, 10 companies of position artillery, 16 ammunition columns, 2 companies of artificers, 8 battalions of train, 8 battalions of engineers, and the necessary troops for sanitary and administrative purposes. The Landwehr has 106 battalions of infantry, the same units of cavalry and most other services as the *Élite* possesses, but only 48 field guns and half the amount of position artillery and ammunition columns. I would commend to the notice of the writer in *Blackwood* the fact that Switzerland, with the cheapest army in Europe, a population about half that of London, and a budget, Cantonal and Federal together, of less than three and a-half millions, finds it worth while to have a field artillery of 348 guns, besides heavy position artillery. But then the Swiss think their freedom and honour worth defending, and those who do not serve personally pay a special tax, which rises according to each man's means and produces about a million francs a year. I am quite ready to admit that these 348 guns do not constitute a field artillery

as well trained as ours ought to be, but 300 of them do belong to the active army, and even those of the Landwehr are fit for something better than merely to be planted immovably in defensive positions.

Since this was written the Swiss have further strengthened themselves for war. The organization of the Landsturm, which was only hinted at in the former law, is now an accomplished fact. Every able-bodied citizen between the ages of 17 and 50, if not serving either in the *Élite* or Landwehr, now belongs to the Landsturm, with certain necessary exceptions. The first class, from 17 to 20, will, in case of war, "or menace of war," be used to strengthen the *Élite* so far as each youth may be capable of bearing arms. Those unfit will become "auxiliaries," and be used when they are strong enough. The second class, composed of all the older men, will fall either into the "Armed Landsturm" or the "Auxiliary Troops." The "Armed Landsturm" will, as soon as possible, like the *Élite* and the Landwehr, be divided into infantry and artillery, and organized in battalions and detachments of gunners whose duty will chiefly be to work guns of defence. The "Auxiliary Troops" will be formed into detachments of pioneers, and special detachments for arsenal work, magazines, medical, butchers and bakers, transport, cyclists, guides, and for other services of a general character. About 40 per cent. of the whole will belong to the "Armed Landsturm," and the rest will strengthen the hands of the fighting force by taking all the auxiliary duties. The Landsturm will not, as a rule, be expected to fight in large bodies, but will execute the thou-

sand tasks, fighting or otherwise, which are likely to be required in a mountainous country. Thus Switzerland, like Germany, is throwing her whole manhood into national defence, her people being determined to keep themselves, as they have made themselves, free.

Here then we have a type very different from that of the great armies, but it is adapted to the purpose which it is meant to serve. It is based on the principle that even children must begin to do something military for their country and to defend their own liberties. It then takes the young men and gives them some military service, never letting them go, altogether, till the age of 50. The Federal Government takes care that there is an organization into which they all fit, and that they are duly provided with all that goes to make an army, as distinguished from an armed crowd. That army may not be so efficient as that of France or Germany, but it is without doubt more ready to take the field than the English militia and volunteers, and even more ready than our so-called two army corps as they stand at present. All its parts go to form a harmonious whole; every man has his appointed place in the organization, and knows it, and, if war should come, field guns will not have to be sacrificed to form ammunition columns. General von der Goltz considers the Swiss system excellent for defence, though not for offensive purposes. At any rate it does not neglect the principle of having a proper proportion of the three arms and of the various subsidiary services.

Another cheap military system is that of Canada. In

principle it is not unlike the Swiss organization, but the English vice of cutting down necessities to please the false Economists is visible in the colony as it is at home. There are never arms enough, nor are the proper proportions of infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineers and other services adhered to. The principle of universal obligatory service exists, but is not carried into practice; in fact everything is neglected except the active militia, which numbers about 37,000 men and is decreasing. All men from 18 to 45 years old owe service to the Dominion; the first class comprising those between 18 and 30, the second class those from 30 to 45; but substitution is allowed and the compulsory ballot is not enforced, so that the system becomes practically what may be called a volunteer militia, like that of England. The law provides for the annual training of 45,000 men during a period of from 8 to 16 days, and the number of those who take part in the drill is only about 20,000, who are drilled for 12 days. Here we have a specimen of the usual British carelessness: the Canadians used to train 40,000 men a year; they have steadily reduced the number and as steadily cut down the vote; like ourselves, they pay for what is not efficient for war purposes, and hope that there will be no war. The artillery are trained for 16 days and are more efficient than the infantry, thanks to the unwearied exertions of officers imported from England and to a college which was formed for scientific instruction. It is very doubtful whether any considerable proportion of the Canadian militia could be mobilized to resist an attack from the American side, and quite certain that no use could be



made of the general service principle, because there are not arms enough, and England in a serious war would want more than she has at home.

The United States have a small regular army consisting of ten regiments of cavalry, five of artillery, twenty-five of infantry, and one of engineers. There are also some Indian scouts. Then there are the organized militia under the various states, but available for the central Government in case of war. They amount to 92,000 in all, and the Americans fondly call them a Landwehr, but they are very far from equality with the German Landwehr. Behind come the unorganized militia, composed of all the manhood of the country to the number of some eight millions, but it is needless to say that there are no proper military arms nor uniforms for this vast multitude. The United States can afford to be unprepared, for the absence of causes of quarrel with great European Powers and the vast extent of the country render any invasion improbable, and an attack by a moderate force absurd. Were it otherwise we should have to recognize that the military organization is totally insufficient for a first-class Power. The United States do not possess an India. Great Britain is in a very different case and can by no effort of will throw off the responsibilities of her position. The United States have never tried their troops against any of the modern European organizations, nor are they likely so to do. They have an excellent military college at West Point, and it is interesting to observe that nearly all the successful generals of the Civil War had received a complete military training as youths. Soldiers

may be rapidly improvised; officers must be prepared for their work by a thorough course of training. It is true that the best preparation for war is war itself, but there must be a beginning during which the rudiments have to be learnt. When, as was the case in the American Civil War, both sides are equally inexperienced, the few on either side who are possessed of knowledge come to the front; but if the training of one side is much better than that of the other, ignorance must produce its usual result in the profession of arms as in any other profession.

One more organization must be touched upon, not as an example to be followed, but as an illustration of that curious misfortune which seems to affect with blight all the military bodies on which the old policy of England used to rely. One of the first of the questions which always arise during a Continental struggle is, "What is to be done about Belgium?" In 1870 we made a bold diplomatic declaration and voted money for an increase of the army by 20,000 men, who, even if they could have been obtained at once—which they could not—would all have been raw recruits. The sudden discovery of our helpless position at that time caused Mr. Cardwell to undertake a series of military reforms; but long before they could take effect, the scare passed over and fatal compromises were made at home. Still England had thrown her ægis over her small ally, and, by that exercise of charity, has, I fear, "pauperized" Belgium as a military Power. The adoption of the principle of general obligation to military service has been proposed again and again, but always defeated. The

theoretical recruitment is partly voluntary and partly by lot for the militia, but in practice the army consists largely of men paid to take the places of those who ought to serve; it is therefore what Continental officers call a mercenary army. In 1870 Belgium mobilized 85,000 men, partly as a garrison for Antwerp, partly for smaller places, and partly as an "army of observation," practically for police purposes. By her present organization she professes to be able to call out over 100,000 men, but only after using up the last of her militia. Still, even Belgium has 4 regiments of field artillery of 10 batteries each; total 40 batteries, or 240 guns, a much larger force than England can put in the field, besides a large amount of siege train fully equipped, which again is conspicuous by its absence in England. Our small ally now bases her defence on the possibility of holding Liège and the line of the Meuse, but follows our remarkable example almost everywhere by refusing to make the sacrifices in peace which alone can render possible the holding of any line in war. In practice, therefore, all that Belgium really does is to hold the fortress of Antwerp for us, as a port of disembarkation. This supposes first the wish to move on the part of the English people, and then a movement by sea which must be protected by the fleet. We find ourselves in presence, here, of one among the vast number of duties which the British fleet is expected to perform all at the same time, until a complete and systematic organization of home and colonial defence sets the navy free at last for its own proper business—namely, that of seeking out and destroying the central

fleets of the enemy. By studying the Belgian military organization we learn nothing for our own imitation, but we receive a lesson. Both Belgium and England have been blind to their military duties, and, when the blind lead the blind, we know what follows.

Thus it has been shown that among Powers which do not profess to be Great, there are various organizations more or less suitable to their needs, and that the smallest of the Continental Powers, for example—Switzerland and Roumania—excel us in such vital points as field artillery, and in general organization for their own particular requirements. All the small Powers, except Belgium, which is demoralized by leaning on our doubtful charity, are better prepared for war than is England, and with them the proportion of the different arms is better adapted for modern war than with ourselves.

## CHAPTER IV.

### OUR "SYSTEM."

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It may be right to notice at the commencement of this chapter a leader in the *Scotsman*, which forms almost the only unfavourable piece of criticism with which the present series of articles has met. This leader assumes the soundness of what is known as the "wet ditch argument" as to the safety of this country, and it misrepresents my views by assuming that my reason for discussing the German military organization was to suggest the question, "What would become of this country if three millions of German soldiers were suddenly landed at Dover?" I thought that I had made it abundantly clear for what reason I explained the working of a scientific military system, and that I had sufficiently detached that examination from the statements on the subject of the possibility of invasion which I made in December last. With regard to the chances of an invasion, which I have already discussed at length, and for my views on which the names that I have mentioned are ample authority, I would only add that we have never yet seen what can be done in the way of dis-

embarking an invading force from ships, when organization is perfect, and the plan well prepared and worked out in every detail, with all the appliances to hand. Just as the Germans surprised the world by their mobilizations in 1866 and 1870, it is at least possible that if an attempt to invade England on carefully thought-out lines were made the world would be equally surprised by the result. Moreover, I have repeatedly explained that I attach even more importance to the danger that our fleet would be paralyzed, by panic keeping it in the Channel to resist invasion, than I do to the prospect of invasion itself; because the whole of our trade would be destroyed, through the consequent capture of the coaling-stations, and the very existence of the Empire menaced, without a man being landed upon our shores. The *Scotsman* is somewhat given to misrepresenting me, for in a less unfavourable leader upon the second article of this series that journal had professed that I had shown the desire to convert Afghanistan into a vassal state. The *Scotsman* ignores or conceals the fact that Mr. Gladstone's Government guaranteed to the Ameer the frontiers of Afghanistan, and that this pledge was repeated in the Queen's name to the Ameer, with every circumstance of formality, when the Cabul ruler came to visit the Indian Viceroy.

Mr. Stanhope, since my last article appeared, has made a speech, of which perhaps I ought to say nothing when I remember the criticism that it received in the *Saturday Review*. Mr. Stanhope's petulance with regard to the exposures which have been made of our unpreparedness for defence was such that it is possible that a portion of the

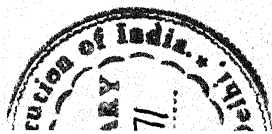
public may think that he really gave some answer. I can leave Lords Carnarvon and Brassey to defend themselves against the Secretary of State for War; but as for what he said that bore upon my own writings I have briefly to show that his reply is no reply at all. "A comprehensive scheme" "has been promulgated," but I have yet to learn either that my statements as to Gibraltar, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and St. Helena, for example, are untrue, or that the weaknesses, which are, as I showed, well known abroad, have yet been remedied. Mr. Stanhope is apparently unrepentant about his artillery reductions, in which he now stands without an atom of military support, and his speech is as unsatisfactory upon our production of heavy guns as it is upon the question of field artillery or on that of coaling-station defence.

The letters that I have received with regard to my last article show me that I have again understated my case against the present position of Gibraltar. One of the most distinguished of our admirals has sent me the exact facts relating to the successful bombardment of the Peruvian towns by merchant steamers at great distances, to which I referred, and these show that the bombardment was executed with even lighter guns than those which I described. My attention too has been very strongly directed to the case of another station besides Gibraltar, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, of which I wrote, and it forms a remarkable example both of the power of Lord Randolph Churchill over a Conservative administration and of the manner in which the safety of the country is disregarded

when the smallest excuse can be found for striking out an item from the Estimates. In 1882 a committee reported in favour of the construction, by convict labour, of a strategical harbour at Dover. Government decided to act upon the report. Another and a confidential committee, consisting I believe of representatives of the War Office and Admiralty, with Sir E. Du Cane, next considered the position on which to build a convict prison for the carrying out of the works. The land was bought and the prison was built, and a staff of convicts has been maintained there for two years at the public cost. In 1886 Lord Randolph Churchill seems to have stopped a necessary vote. In 1887 the vote did not appear in the Estimates, and Government announced that they would "come to a decision" in 1888, although a previous Government had come to a decision in 1882, and the present Government in 1886. Conservative Governments are rightly fond of talking about the importance of continuity in foreign affairs, but continuity in military matters is at least as necessary.

In commencing in my last chapter the examination of the remedies for the deplorable condition of affairs to which I had pointed in the first two chapters, I suggested the wisdom of considering first the scientific principles of military administration as we might find them to exist abroad, and, in the next place, the existing British system—so far as it could be called a system. I now take up the second branch of this enquiry.

We have already seen that the British forces, though they are not ready for the field, are at least considerable in





numbers. Without noticing items nominally but not really available, such as the Irish constabulary, pensioners beyond the active age, and so forth, and leaving aside the native army in India, we have three different principal bodies: the regular army, the militia, and the volunteers; the whole amounting to considerably over 600,000 men. In examining them a little in detail I shall take generally the regular army and army reserve as they were at the beginning of 1887, a period for which we have official returns: the militia, yeomanry, and volunteers at the date of their inspections in 1886. The numbers are now slightly greater than they were at the periods mentioned, but for convenience of reference it is better to take them all out of the last published General Annual Return of the British Army.

#### THE REGULAR ARMY.

The total number of troops of all kinds in the regular army at home and abroad, including India and the colonies, was at the time named

	208,357
To which must be added for war purposes, 1st Class	
army reserve . . . . .	46,858
2nd Class . . . . .	5,695
Total of troops available everywhere . . . . .	260,910
Add the militia reserve, as it is called, which is also	
available for service anywhere during war . . . .	31,646
Total available for general service in case of war . . . . .	<u>292,556</u>

Looking back over the last twenty years, one finds that in 1867 there was no army reserve worth naming. The average number of troops during that year was about

200,000, and by 1870 it had decreased to 180,000, to which should be added a certain body of militia reserve men never very fit to take the field, but ready at call to be placed in depôts and trained. These militia reserve men are simply men who have, for a moderate fee, agreed to give their services in the regular forces in case of war and to receive a little extra training in peace with regular regiments. If we eliminate them from both periods it appears that there has been a gain on the whole, since 1870, of some 70,000 men, or nearly the equivalent of two army corps supposing them to be organized as a field army. The whole 290,000 men existing at the beginning of 1887 would, under the same conditions, form the equivalent of about eight army corps, that is to say, if the men were all in health and strength, sufficiently well trained, and all in the same country. Everybody knows that the actual state of affairs is very different, and it becomes necessary to enter upon a process of subtraction.

To begin with, India absorbs about 70,000; Egypt accounted for over 9,000 at the beginning of 1887, but that garrison has been reduced. The Colonies, including Mediterranean garrisons, take about 25,000; and there are troops on the seas going backwards and forwards. The final result is that only a little over 102,000 regular troops remain in the United Kingdom; and thus, with the addition of the army reserve, but leaving aside the militia reserve as hardly fit to fight in the first line till they have had more training, we have as a result a force of about 150,000, which, however, includes all the recruits and all the depôts necessary

for the whole army at home and abroad. The 102,000 regular troops included on the 1st of January, 1887, over 12,600 cavalry (including that of the Household); 2,200 horse artillery, since reduced; about 14,500 field and garrison artillery in nearly equal proportions; 4,500 engineers; nearly 6,000 footguards; 57,500 infantry of the line; 2,500 commissariat and transport corps; 400 ordnance store troops; a few ordnance artificers; and 2,000 medical staff corps. Now, taking infantry as a base of calculation, and remembering that all the recruits and all the invalided men are at home, together with a large number of soldiers employed in various positions of a more or less permanent character, it is easy to understand to what an extent numbers are reduced, and how few sound, vigorous, well-trained men remain. An army corps contains some 25,000 bayonets as its backbone, and it is not very probable that we should find even that number of infantry soldiers fit for the first line and free from other employment. To mobilize one corps, and still more to mobilize two, it would be requisite to call out the first-class army reserve, even if all the efficient regular troops were put in the field; but they could not all be put in the field, because the fortresses cannot be left without any trained troops at all, especially at first; so again we have more reductions for the garrisons. It is an unfortunate fact that Ireland always subtracts a large number of good troops not requisite merely on account of her strategical position. In case of threatened invasion it would be absolutely necessary to withdraw by far the greater part of the regular troops from Ireland and to supply

their places by English militia, but it would be difficult, for political reasons, to employ British volunteers in Ireland.

If my readers will attentively consider what has now been said they will understand at once how it was that no such force as two real army corps was, or could possibly have been, paraded at Aldershot for the Jubilee Review. Taking the army and its reserves as they would be in case of a great war, when either invasion might be expected or a counter-stroke against an enemy designed, supposing Ireland no longer to swallow up so large a proportion of the army as she does at present, and supposing the army reserves called out, there would be enough troops to form two army corps and a cavalry division with the low proportion of field artillery now allotted to those corps and that division as mobilized, and no more. That amount of field artillery is very seriously less than the proportion allowed by every other country, and I do not believe that there is a single responsible officer who does not consider that the proportion ought to be increased. Lord Wolseley, though he has been credited with the idea of the reduction, has said distinctly again and again that he does not consider our proportion of field artillery sufficient; and even on this starvation scale there would be none left to commence the formation of a third corps, but there would be sufficient regular infantry to form a nucleus of the various great garrisons, and garrison artillery also to form small bodies in the fortresses. The main defence of such places as Portsmouth, Plymouth, Dover, and so on, would devolve upon the militia and volunteers. The British army corps is

I understand to consist of three divisions and some corps troops, each division having two brigades of four battalions, besides three batteries of six guns; and the corps artillery would have five batteries, three of which would be horse artillery. An extra battalion of infantry would belong to the corps troops, so that there would be altogether 25 battalions and 84 guns. The cavalry division would have two brigades of three regiments each and two batteries of horse artillery to each brigade; the tendency of modern armies being, however, to have three batteries instead of two to the brigade of cavalry. This calculation shows not only that two army corps could not possibly have been put in the field for the Aldershot Review, but that, as designed for active service, when the reserves have been called out, the British army corps would be distinctly weaker in field artillery than similar corps of the great European Powers. In fact, to please Lord Randolph Churchill and the so-called "Economists," we are deliberately preparing for the army the same sort of inferiority which placed us in such difficulties during our naval fights with the Americans, who sent against our frigates stronger frigates with more guns. This tendency to handicap ourselves disadvantageously, but with perfect deliberation, when calculating our forces for a land struggle, may be characteristic of a people which always despises its enemies, but it is not "business." No one has more admiration than myself for the splendid qualities of the British soldier or for the dash and bearing of the British officer, but we ought to remember that during the last quarter of a century the Powers which we might possi-

bly have to meet have received a great deal of training in modern war, and may be presumed to have got some advantage from that training. Is it wise to start deliberately overburdened with difficulties which do not touch them, or to place ourselves of our own accord in a position of inferiority? The British army corps should, I submit, be as strong in every respect as a Continental army corps, and it will not be so according to the proposed organization.

To place either one or two army corps in the field, or as it is called to mobilize them, a large number of horses would be required, as I have previously shown. It appears that to mobilize the two army corps and cavalry division which are to compose our small movable army, 20,000 horses would be required at once. On the principles which have hitherto prevailed, the rate of buying has been about 100 horses per week, and, as it is calculated that the waste in war would be at the rate of 10,000 horses per annum at the least, we could thus neither procure the animals at first, nor keep them up to their proper strength even if the full number were once procured. The plan now is to invite horse-holders to register their animals for the sake of a small fee. I believe that the Government offers 10s. each for the registered horses, and promises to pay, if they are taken for war purposes, £10 a head more than the value decided upon by valuation. We have yet to learn how this plan will work, but when objectors to my criticisms are inclined to doubt the facts which I have advanced, because of what they call their pessimistic character, I would invite them to consider what a condition we have been in for many years

according to the statements of Government officials. It has been known, and reported again and again, that the horses for the mobilization of even one army corps could not possibly be procured by the means existing. The fact has been known to all the members of the military staff, and should have been known to every Minister of War; yet no means have been taken to remedy the evil. In all such cases it is necessary that that impetus should be given by public opinion without which no progress in efficiency can be made. It is to that public opinion that I appeal; and the question of horses may now be fairly quoted as a clear proof of the extraordinary condition of unreadiness for war in which we may remain for long periods without any effort being made to meet the deficiencies which are known to exist.

From what has been said it is evident that the regular army with its reserves can provide 70,000 men for India, and the necessary dépôts for keeping up the strength of that 70,000, and that it can garrison the great Mediterranean fortresses, and place a nucleus of regular troops in the home fortresses. Besides all this it will in the future be able to place two army corps in the field, with a cavalry division and some troops for the line of communications, provided that all the requisite horses and carriages are so prepared that they can be ready exactly when and where they will be wanted. When all this is done there will remain some infantry and cavalry in excess, which may either form the nucleus of a third corps or may act as a small force not having corps organization; but there would be absolutely no field artillery

in excess of the force just named, and not only so, but the proportion of guns actually in the corps is much too small according to modern ideas of military organization. Two army corps would represent something over 70,000 men, but these would not be all fighting men, for they would include all the various elements which I have enumerated earlier in this chapter.

#### THE MILITIA.

The militia, which is the old constitutional force, and for the recruiting of which the Government has still the power to use the pressure of conscription if absolutely necessary, has undergone many vicissitudes. Taken altogether it contains a very fine and solid body of men, who do on the whole come up at their periods of training with fair regularity. For instance, while the number of men enrolled was in 1886 over 122,000, there were present at training more than 105,000. Of these, in round numbers, 90,000 were infantry, 14,000 artillery, and 1,000 engineers. But the 14,000 artillery did not include, and could not possibly have included, any force which could be placed in the field. They are practically all what is called garrison or coast artillery. In the total number of the militia is included the militia reserve, which might or might not be taken to increase the strength of the regular army. It numbers about 30,000. The militia contains men of various ages, and as a matter of fact it has in its ranks a considerable number of old soldiers, although it is not the intention of the Government that such should be the case. Some of the corps are



very fine bodies of troops, commanded by officers who have served in the regular army and are very well able both to maintain discipline and to train the men. The efficiency of many militia battalions or brigades of artillery is very high indeed, and the force deserves far more recognition by the public than it receives. It supplies a large number of recruits to the regular army. Indeed it would appear that many young men enter the militia to begin with to try how they like soldiering. A genial commander, who is also a good disciplinarian, has the power of attracting to the ranks of the regular army a considerable number of his men : but it is a little against human nature to suppose that it will be his main object to get rid of the men whom he has trained, for the sake of supplying the wants of the regular service. At different periods of danger some of the militia have been formed into field batteries, and at the end of a few months' training have become efficient ; but no militia has been so prepared in peace as to be able to be mobilized as field artillery at the commencement of war, and the campaigns of the present day are usually so short and sharp that nothing can be counted as available which requires a long period of training. Doubtless we could form field artillery out of many elements provided plenty of time were given us, and provided also that the guns and ammunition were ready and the horses could be easily obtained. But that is only as much as to say that field artillery can be created now or at any other time ; to assert that such artillery could be put in the field with any hope of success against a skilful and well-trained enemy is altogether another matter. To attempt such a

course would be to handicap ourselves even more than in the case of the old small frigates and the new small army corps. It may be taken for granted that the militia artillery would be almost entirely required for the fortresses. There has never been a great war in which the militia did not volunteer in considerable numbers for service in the field. As a rule, however, they have only been sent to fortresses in the Mediterranean or elsewhere in order to disengage the regular troops quartered there.

The weakest point in the militia system is the comparative want of training among the regimental officers and a certain deficiency in number of officers. No doubt if a great war and national danger stirred the spirit of Englishmen we should find very many young gentlemen seeking commissions in the militia, but this is not what is wanted. War has of late years become so much a business of skill, and has enlisted on its side so many arts and sciences, that an untrained officer is practically useless. Efforts have constantly been made to increase the number of militia officers and to improve their training, but on the whole the endeavour has not been successful. A large number of the militia officers are young county gentlemen who would lead their men with all the courage inherent in the race, but they would not know how to handle their troops skilfully, to extricate themselves from difficulties, or to take the best advantage of the mistakes of an enemy. So long as this is the case the militia, however good the men may be and however gallant the officers, can only be estimated as a second-rate force. The Duke of Wellington (whose opinion of the

militia ought to be as high as that of any officer, seeing that many of them fought under his hand at Waterloo) wrote to Sir John Burgoyne in January, 1847, a letter which has become historical. It contained the following passage :—

"We hear a great deal of the spirit of the people of England, for which no man entertains a higher respect than I do. But, unorganized, undisciplined, without systematic subordination established and well understood, this spirit exposed to the fire of musketry and cannon and to sabres and bayonets of *disciplined troops*, would only expose those animated by such spirit to confusion and destruction. Let any man examine our maps and road books, consider of the matter" (a possible invasion and march on London), "and judge for himself. I know of no mode of resistance, much less of protection from this danger, excepting by *an army in the field* capable of meeting and contending with its formidable enemy, aided by all the means of fortification which experience, war, and science can suggest. I should be deemed foolhardy in engaging for the defence of the empire with an army composed of such a force of militia" (150,000 men). "I may be so, I confess it. I should feel more confidence in an army of regular troops."

Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne also wrote :—

"Hitherto we have deluded ourselves by a grand show on paper of an aggregate of regulars, militia, and volunteers, as an available field force, deceiving ourselves still further by the title we bestow upon the two latter of Reserve Forces, as if they were ready for every emergency. It is impossible to remonstrate too strongly against the misconception of the real character of these forces caused by this unfortunate misnomer. Before any improvement in our military means can be made, we must dismiss from our minds any idea of the militia and volunteers being available for an effective augmentation of the regular forces until great changes are made in their organization."

Here we have two soldiers who have known war declaring that under the organization which existed then, and which in these respects exists now, the militia could not be relied upon

to take the place of regular troops in the field. There were at that time no great fortresses in England, and neither the Duke of Wellington nor Sir John Burgoyne meant that the militia could not be made available in fortresses so as to relieve the garrisons and enable them to take the field. In all such cases, however, whether the comparatively untrained troops are infantry or artillery, it will be necessary to have bodies of the same arms from the regular army present within the fortresses to attend to matters which require the most skill and to set an example of discipline, drill, and general management. General Sir Lintorn Simmons, now Governor of Malta, proposed in 1871 that the militia should be abolished and the regular army increased in proportion. His recommendation did not find favour, chiefly because it was felt that the perpetual changes of politics and the efforts of politicians, who are occasionally seized with a burning desire to decrease expenditure whatever may be the consequences, would inevitably, at some time or another, reduce the regular army, whether the militia existed or not. The latter force has, besides, a noble history, and I, for one, should regret to see it abolished. On the contrary, I think that it ought to be developed, and the deficiencies of training and of officers surmounted by whatever means may be found necessary for the purpose.

#### THE VOLUNTEERS.

The volunteer force is as curious and interesting a product of national spirit as has ever been seen. There have

always been volunteer forces at every crisis in the history of the country. This is natural enough, for in times of emergency there are few men not ready to come forward to defend the soil of their country and their own liberties. But the peculiarity of the present volunteer force is its remarkable persistence in the face of difficulties of all kinds, some of them made by the Government, and the permanent character which it has assumed. The volunteers as they exist are now more than a quarter of a century old; indeed I was myself a non-commissioned officer as long ago as 1862. Instead of decreasing as time went on, the volunteers have steadily increased. At the time of their inspections in 1886 they counted 226,752 men, about the same number as that of the whole field armies with which Napoleon the Third expected to invade Germany or stem the tide of invasion in 1870. Speaking roughly, and in round numbers, the volunteers have of light horse nearly 300, of artillery 41,600, engineers 9,900, mounted rifles 50, rifles (infantry) 174,271, medical staff corps 579. The ages of the men run from under seventeen years to over fifty years; but the proportion is greatest between nineteen and twenty-one. Within this period of age there are no fewer than about 44,000; between twenty-one and twenty-two 19,000; between twenty-two and twenty-three 16,700; and so downwards as the age increases, though there are actually nearly 2,500 over fifty years old. This is certainly a curious force, and can be no hot-headed body of men, for it counts in its ranks about 50,000 above the age of thirty.

The social position of the officers is peculiar. While the commissioned ranks include a considerable number who are country gentlemen, on the whole as a force the volunteers represent, both in their officers and men, the wealth, the position, the intelligence, and the spirit of the middle classes, especially the dwellers in towns. It was not to be expected that at their first formation the volunteers should fall at once into habits of strict discipline. They behaved in many cases with an easy-going carelessness, and a neglect both of obedience and appearance, which very much startled the regular army, and caused even their numerous friends to shake their heads in some anxiety. The behaviour of French National Guards occurred to the mind of society in general, and it was remembered that nothing is more dangerous to the liberties and well-being of a State than that any force carrying arms and not obedient to discipline should exist in its midst. But there is always at the back of every British movement a large amount of common sense, and the volunteers, who had been at first alternately petted and "snubbed," soon settled into their proper position, and have since occupied a very definite and honourable place in the ranks of the defenders of Great Britain. They have volunteered for foreign service in war, and there exist at this moment organizations both for Post Office and medical work which might be counted upon to relieve the regular army even in distant campaigns.

One special peculiarity of the volunteers is that they combine extremes of many kinds. It has already been shown

how extraordinary is the difference in age — a difference which must inevitably show itself during the toils of war ; but there are among them other equally startling extremes. The picked shots of the volunteers are probably the best in the world. For long-range shooting and all practice at fixed targets no country has hitherto matched the performances at Wimbledon. On the other hand, there is the fact that the volunteers have said of themselves that their average shooting is not what it ought to be, and that the want of ranges and other difficulties must keep the standard low for the great bulk of the force.

Volunteer officers are to be met whose favourite study is the art of war. There have been some curious and interesting demonstrations of this fact. To take an example with which I am familiar, there is established at Manchester a body of officers called the Tactical Society ; and from that body has grown another tactical society with perhaps a slightly altered name. Not only do these gentlemen spend a considerable portion of their leisure time in the study of strategy and tactics and the playing of war games, but they issue a series of publications, to which I have already had to allude, sometimes translations, sometimes original essays, and these small books show an acquaintance with the details of the military art which might surprise, and perhaps almost humiliate, the average officer of the regular army. Such work as this is only another proof, if proof were needed, of the marvellous instinct for the art of war which I believe to be engrained

in our English character, however we may overlay it with the veneer of civilization. If there had been no other proofs, if we had not the Indian Mutiny, the campaigns in Egypt, and that in Afghanistan, to show us how the spirit of the British officer and soldier stands, it would have been sufficient to turn to the volunteers to see that even the English middle classes practically love the art of war and admire the gifts and the training of the soldier. All volunteer officers are not, however, of the same calibre, and I am afraid that in this case, as in most others, the chain is no stronger than its weakest link. Of course for great success in war military genius must be found, but it can only work with the materials which it discovers, and the object of military organizers should always be to produce as good an average as possible, with few or none falling below certain conditions which may be considered as expressing the minimum of efficiency. The volunteer officers have come forward very well at different times to pass tactical examinations, partly because those examinations win for the officers who have passed them certain extra allowances, all of which go to the good of the corps. But this spirit seems to be somewhat abating, and it is to be feared that, whether on account of the unreal nature of tactical examinations generally, or for other reasons, the passing of these tests has fallen somewhat out of favour. Thus we find represented in the volunteers the highest and the lowest ages, the best and the worst shooting, and a very high and a very low condition of military knowledge.



It is needless to say that neither the volunteers nor the militia are provided with all the requirements for taking the field. They have no field artillery and could not form one in a short space of time. A little training would make their infantry and garrison artillery admirable, but they would be always deficient in leadership, because the average level of military knowledge possessed by the officers is insufficient, nor does the number of officers, trained or untrained, ever reach that laid down by regulation as the condition of efficiency. I presume that ancient and well-to-do organization called the Honourable Artillery Company is to be classed with the volunteers, and it could put at least six field pieces in line. Perhaps it is needless to say that the pattern of the guns is not usually the newest and most effective. Still, if the Honourable Artillery Company should be classed as volunteers, the volunteer force can produce six field guns in time of war.

One more national force remains to be mentioned—the yeomanry. This body of horsemen rather tends to decrease. Its strength on 1st January, 1887, was about 11,500. The officers are usually county men, the privates are from the classes which either possess or can borrow riding horses and subscribe a little money at a pinch; many of them are to be seen more or less often in the hunting-field, and a large proportion can handle a fowling-piece with good effect. With a little encouragement the yeomanry might be developed into just such a body as the Boers, who gave our troops under General Colley a lesson in the power of

irregulars when the partisans are bold riders and good shots. But here again we have one of those curious topsy-turvy arrangements which always appear when a nation takes no trouble to put its military affairs on a proper basis. Of all the British forces the yeomanry would make the best mounted infantry, or dragoons of the Russian type. An immense amount of trouble is always being taken to turn out some mounted infantry, a little trained to the work of that new arm, but, meanwhile, we take almost as much trouble to make the yeomanry unfit for that purpose. They are drilled as cavalry pure and simple, and as cavalry they are inspected. No yeomanry officer has arisen to popularize and reform his arm, and little is seen or heard of it. Yet it is exactly the kind of force that might be made popular and efficient, and it possesses a name which is an English epic in itself. In this direction also lies one chance of producing an auxiliary field artillery, because the yeomanry are accustomed to the care and use of horses, and either possess them or can procure them. Of all classes in the kingdom, that from which the town volunteers spring is perhaps the least fitted by nature, habit, and training to yield us good horsemasters.

Since the return from which I have taken these figures was issued, the horse artillery, which then had twelve service batteries at home, has been reduced, and the field artillery has practically suffered a much larger reduction for war purposes, by the adoption of the principle that all the

ammunition columns required for war will be obtained, not as is the case everywhere else, by having small and economical cadres in peace, but by breaking up good field batteries in time of war, so that they will be no longer active batteries with guns, but only carriers of ammunition for other batteries. As in war each battery has six guns, the total loss will be, as far as is possible to calculate in the confusion which here envelops us, a total of 90 guns for horse and field artillery together, and this allows for the restoration of one horse-artillery battery, which I am told took place. There will remain of active batteries nine horse and twenty-four field, which, reckoned at six guns per battery, gives a total for war of 198 guns capable of being placed in the field by the use of men from the reserve, and by some means of obtaining horses such as does not exist at present. The militia have no field guns for service, nor have the volunteers, nor the yeomanry. The Honourable Artillery Company, for the reason I have given, can hardly be reckoned upon to take the field at once. Let us therefore set down the horse and field artillery as being, in round numbers, 200 guns.

The general result, given for convenience in tabular form, with the use of round numbers near enough to the truth, will be for the home army, inclusive of the organization by which the forces in India and the Colonies are recruited and reinforced, 1st Class Army Reserve, Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, somewhat as follows :—

## FIGHTING FORCES AT HOME.

	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Artillery.	Field Guns.	Engineers.	Other Services.
Regular Army .	*63,500	12,500	17,000	200	4,500	5,000
1st Class Army Reserve }	*37,500	3,000	2,500	—	—	2,000
Militia . . .	105,500	—	16,000	—	1,000	—
Volunteer Efficients	170,000	200	40,500	—	9,500	500
Yeomanry . .	—	11,500	—	—	—	—
All forces combined	376,500	27,200	76,000	200	15,000	7,500

I have omitted the 2nd Class Army Reserve because it consists of men not very useful for war purposes, and rounded the figures off by giving as 500 any fraction over 250, except in the case of the volunteer light horse and mounted rifles, which used to number about 500, but are now dying out. In fact I have given as fair an estimate as could be obtained of the force which Great Britain could produce of all kinds, leaving India and the Colonies out of calculation. When we come to examine it a little we find that it amounts to a force all told of about half a million with fewer than 200 field guns. During the past year this force has increased. By bringing home troops from Egypt, and other measures, the regular army has some 5,000 more men at home, the 1st Class Army Reserve probably stands at

\* During the year that has since elapsed, both the infantry and its 1st Class Reserve have been considerably increased at the expense of the field artillery.

nearly 50,000, which number will vary year by year, and the auxiliary forces have also increased, but there is no return showing the actual figures of each, and any change which increases the infantry without increasing the field guns only adds to the force of my argument. Bowing to the desire of my critics, I will talk no more here of Great Powers, but will compare the army of Great Britain with those of the small states, and see what sort of proportion we have of field guns compared with them. The figures given are of a time antecedent to that for which I have given British figures, and whatever change has since occurred has been in the direction of increasing the proportion of field guns. Let me once more tabulate the facts to be brought out, premising that in the case of the small Powers their full strength of "instructed men" is given.

	Men.	Field Guns.
Denmark . . . . .	50,000	96
Holland . . . . .	70,000	120
Belgium . . . . .	105,000	240
Servia, including national militia .	175,000	200
Roumania . . . . .	200,000	336
Switzerland, without new Landsturm .	215,000	348
Total . . . . .	815,000	1,340
Average . . . . .	135,833	223

The proportion is thus 1.64 field guns per thousand counting all the forces of the minor states, and at that rate Great Britain should have at home for her 500,000 men 820 field guns besides those siege trains and guns of position which we ought also to possess, and which most of these

small Powers have. I maintain that an extraordinary deficiency in field artillery is the first feature to strike an honest examiner of our military organization, and if the guns destroyed for all practical purposes by Mr. Stanhope's changes and reductions were restored to-morrow we should still have not nearly half so many field guns as ought to be our proper proportion. To crown the absurdity of the situation, if our two army corps with their cavalry division were sent abroad, we should still have some 425,000 men at home but no field artillery. In other words we dare not send these two army corps away unless it be absolutely certain that no attempt at invasion can be made. But there could be no certainty of the kind until our enemy's fleets were destroyed. Therefore all hope or even possibility of despatching those corps for an early counter-attack seems to vanish, and it is clear that we are not in the position to do what has been laid down as the least that we ought to have in our power—namely, to send two army corps and a cavalry division abroad, and yet remain strong enough for home defence. The first step which ought to be taken is, in my opinion, to save the fourteen batteries which are now doomed to extinction as fighting units so soon as a British army is mobilized, and this can be done by creating the cadres of ammunition columns to be filled up to proper strength from the reserve in case of war. I shall have more to say on the question of field artillery later on, but the want of field guns in the home forces leaps in one's face when one tries to compare our army with any other, and it demands constant attention till the gap is filled up.

The second obvious want is that of officers. The regular army itself has never its full complement of officers, and the militia and volunteers are notoriously deficient in this respect both as regards quantity and quality. Other nations suffer in the same way, but not of their own deliberate choice. When an army numbering several millions of men has to be dealt with, such as that of Germany, or Russia, or France, it becomes extremely difficult and expensive to keep up a proper number of officers in readiness for war, especially where the middle classes from which the supply must be drawn are comparatively weak in numbers and already caught to a great extent in the meshes of the military net. During the Crimean War we had to make a rule that lieutenants should not be promoted to captaincies till they had been two years in the service, and in 1870-71 the expenditure of German officers was so great that at the end of the war even lance-sergeants (*vicefeldwebel*), in many cases, took the command of companies. In December, 1870, a Bavarian infantry division was so reduced by severe losses that it only possessed at the front a single captain of the line. There are people so enamoured of the German system that they would follow it in its weaknesses since they cannot in its strength, and Ministers have been only too ready to snatch at any support in cutting down either officers or men. In this case it is to be remarked that the Germans only yield to a dire necessity of which they always complain, but they at least take care to keep up in peace the full number allowed them, and to manufacture as many as they can for reserves by the one-year volunteer

system. Officers thus produced have served a year in the ranks with, in addition to the ordinary soldier's training, constant tactical exercises, during which they have to learn the duties of officers. We, with more than Chinese absurdity, invite officers of the reserve to pass an examination in tactics, solely out of books; but have refused permission for them even to study the books under Garrison Instructors. No: they must go to "crammers," who, sensibly enough, spend their time in examining the examiners and discovering the odds for or against certain questions being put. I do not blame those extremely able gentlemen whose industry and common sense are brought in to supply a much felt want, but I certainly question whether these examinations are of any practical value, and I find that officers of the militia and volunteers are moved by a certain healthy merriment when they discuss the subject.

Trained or untrained, there are never enough officers even in the regular army to meet the waste of peace, much less of war, and if that war were in the East there would have to be a sudden and large increase in the Staff Corps as it is called, that is in the officers attached to native regiments. This would cause a drain on the British regiments and again reduce their officers, while if the reserve forces were called out the case would be yet worse. Is there any special reason why the British Empire, of all realms, needs only a small staff of officers? On the contrary, of all the Great Powers, our need for a large number of officers in proportion to men is the greatest, both because of the slight education of the classes from which our soldiers are almost



entirely drawn, and because any real strain must inevitably bring about a development of force not by enlisting a few more English, Scotch, or Irish under our banners, but by making available the immense masses, colonial or Indian, which would have to strengthen the arm of British power. Is it possible to conceive a more absurd situation than that of the wealthiest country in the world, with a vast reserve of high-blooded youth lying idle, and enormous masses of warlike people, Sikhs, Goorkhas, Mahrattas, Zulus, Arabs, Malays, and what not, under our hands "spoiling for a fight," while this nation is unprepared to defend its own possessions and its very existence in circumstances which all know to be more than likely to occur? This nation, our nation, might absolutely keep the peace of the world, yet shivers at every breeze of Continental politics. Nor can we assert with truth, as we can about general want of preparation, that this was always England's way. England's way, when she was rising to power, was to be the pioneer of the world in enterprise, and in war to lead Turks, Red Indians, American colonists, East Indians, and Negroes, to subdue her rivals. We now see German officers organizing the Turkish army; French and Germans are pushing past us into the heart of Africa; Russians promise to raid on India with the Turcoman cavalry of Central Asia; and though we once could beat all comers, we now think ourselves incompetent even to hold our own. Time was when a few British adventurers or soldiers of fortune would have formed for themselves an empire in the Soudan. That kind of irregular action has nearly come to an end, on the whole

for the good of mankind, but the British Empire still contains men of the same breed. Instead of being always short of officers we should, I think, have a superabundance, and these trained in all the arts of war, and taught the trick of organizing and leading the wild races which constitute so large a proportion of the people of the British realm.

To form armies which will be of any value against the power of "armed nations" it is necessary to provide modern weapons, and here again we are weak just where we should be strong. There is never a time when we have arms enough of the same pattern for home and Indian requirements, with the necessary reserve. At this moment the field artillery has several patterns of guns in face of the opinion of that best of artillery teachers, Prince Kraft von Hohenlohe, who in his letters on artillery thanks heaven that he sees a time approaching when the German field artillery will have only one kind of gun. As for rifles, we still have a large proportion of old Sniders, though the Martini-Henry has been "in" so long that it also is becoming obsolete. It is one of the most astonishing features of our "system" that with all our enormous expenditure we manage to drop behind other nations both in the quality of our weapons and the proportional number of them to the hands that would have to use them. The reason probably is that the country has gradually arrived at the absurd belief that Great Britain alone of all nations in the world can by prudence escape the common lot, and never have war again except with savages. From this unfounded and unwise opinion springs grave carelessness as to the condition of the military forces, and

Governments desirous of presenting a comparatively small Budget fail to keep up the necessary quantity of arms and stores, because deficiency in these is the weakness easiest to conceal. There was great indignation when this charge was first made, and stout denial; but the fact has now been confessed by so many officials that there is no longer any doubt about it. Thus we, who should always be in a state of readiness to supply arms to improvised forces, and to colonial levies, have never enough for the purposes of the home army. We are always compromising between the popularity of a Government and the safety of the Empire, as a patient who, when ordered to the Engadine or to the south of France, might compromise between his pocket and his health, and betake himself only to Margate or to Shooter's Hill.

Another attempt at compromise is that between short and long service. I have touched on this point before, but cannot pass it by in this chapter which is devoted to an examination of the existing British military "system." After the war of 1866, when Prussia had with her young troops but superior military education for the time destroyed the military power of Austria, which had rested on a long-service army and stern discipline, a few British officers took up the question and studied how we could form a short-service army and good reserves. There lingered still the notion that Prussia had won by some extraordinary combination of lucky events, and men of the old school went about saying that we had yet to see what would happen when the Prussian army met that of France, which was, like

the Austrian, organized on the principle of long service. So, in the summer of 1870, when the collision became inevitable, the officers—for there were some—who said, and even wrote, that Prussia would win, were few, and their voices were almost lost in the general chorus. France went down like Austria, and her greater perseverance only led to more terrible humiliation and disaster. The success of Germany was ascribed to three chief causes: first, a greater mass of men more quickly mobilized: second, a better artillery, more boldly handled: third, better training for both officers and men. The third point had already been investigated in England after the Austro-Prussian war, and a Royal Commission had established an excellent starting point for military education. Mr. Cardwell began to take measures for the production of a reserve by means of short service, and his first idea was to copy the German plan of making the service in the ranks three years. But two difficulties stood in the way. A very large number of recruits would be required annually, and all men of the old school prophesied that short service would be unpopular in the recruiting market. Such was the first difficulty, and the second was that the Indian reliefs would necessitate the bringing home and sending out each year more than a third of the whole white army. A compromise was arrived at by which the term became six years in the active army and six in the reserve, the reserve men being paid sixpence a day, but without any food, clothes, or other extras. Every battalion abroad was to have a battalion at home acting as its training school, and behind these two battalions

were to stand a *depôt* and at least one militia battalion. The home battalions, except the first eighteen for foreign service, were to be small. By this organization recruits would receive their drills at the *depôt* centres and then in the home battalion, so that the foreign battalions might count on being kept full both in peace and war. In case of the home battalion being ordered out for active service, the *depôt* was to be at once increased to a strength sufficient to feed both battalions, and the militia battalion was to be called out. Now this plan would really have worked pretty well on condition that its details were kept in working order. One of the conditions was a high strength for the first eighteen battalions, but the very next year the Chancellor of the Exchequer was allowed to set his veto on the arrangement by cutting down the expenses, so that the eighteen battalions were reduced in strength. Military men are accustomed to have every arrangement upset, and there was little protest. The reserve began to grow by degrees, and all seemed to be working with sufficient smoothness. The field artillery was increased and even autumn manœuvres instituted, to the immense benefit of the army; but the manœuvres soon died out, killed perhaps more by the country gentlemen who did not like their shooting disturbed than by any other adverse influence.

When the wars at the Cape and in Afghanistan came upon us, the fair-seeming organization showed itself to be a whited sepulchre, in which were found, not eighteen regiments ready for the field with others to follow, but a set of skeletons. The occasion was not one of a sufficiently critical

character for us to call out the reserves, so the battalions which had to take the field were made up to their war strength by drafts from other battalions. Nor were these taken, as one would have expected, from those lowest on the list, but, on the contrary, from others of the eighteen battalions themselves, so that when a further call came, such cohesion as had existed in the choice eighteen had disappeared; and, to crown all, the depôts were not raised to the higher strength which had been laid down in the organization, nor were the militia battalions called out. Thus the Cardwell scheme never had the faintest chance of success. Before it had seen the light for a single year its parents cut off its hands, and when war came and the poor thing's strength had to be tested, the bystanders deprived it of its feet and its head, finally reviling the trunk for not performing the functions expected from the body. This is the kind of treatment to which every attempt to establish a working system is subjected, and one is not surprised that "things go wrong sometimes;" the only wonder is that we ever succeed in war at all. There is an unreasonable expectation that British officers and soldiers will win against all odds and under every difficulty that their countrymen can heap upon them, and from Wellington downwards our generals have always had to complain of the system with which they must work. If they often attract to British arms the applause of the world, it must also be confessed that they sometimes break down.

The compromise which occurred in length of service was admitted for the sake of India; but India was by no means

satisfied with the arrangement; India found the six years' service too short for her requirements. A recruit is not wanted until he has been somewhat trained, and then he is not fit for campaigning till he has been a year or two in the country, if he is ever fit at all. It takes some weeding before a battalion commander can say that his men are all fit for war, and a British battalion is certainly unfit for a considerable time after it lands in India. The six years were found too short, being virtually reduced to about four at most of work. Moreover, the frequent reliefs necessitated by a service of even moderate length were highly expensive. Mr. Childers, following to a certain extent the view of Lord Airey's Committee, increased the length of service to seven years, and even eight if the men were in India. It is an entire misnomer to call this short service. If we take a youth under nineteen (and the bulk of the recruits are very young), if we give him that thorough smartening up which the young soldier has to undergo, drill him to the use of arms, and open his mind to teach him how to get the better of his adversary under all conditions, we do nothing but improve him for civil life. He will be found brighter, steadier, and more useful for having been a soldier. If we keep him for a long time and then discharge him with a pension he has at least something to live on, and has a shrewd notion of how to take care of himself. But if we keep him six or eight years, and, above all, if we allow him to be idle, he will contract habits which unfit him for the sober work of a labourer or mechanic. When his reserve time is over we

have no pension for him, and we have done him more harm than good. Thus from no point of view is our compromise good for the service, the soldier himself, or his country. If the compromise does not "pay" in any sense of the word, if it suits neither India nor Europe, nor the soldier himself in view of his later life, it may be wise to look facts in the face and cease compromising in matters so vitally necessary for safety.

Both Lord Wolseley and Sir F. Roberts ask for shorter service at home, longer service in India; and, though Lord Wolseley shrinks from the words "a separate army," and Sir F. Roberts from the words "an Indian army," they both recognize the necessity for accepting certain facts. I am not anxious to adopt any particular form of words. In my suggested scheme both the Indian and home organizations would be under the Crown, as the old Indian army was not; both would be available for service in any part of the world, which the Company's army was not; and being under the same supreme command—vested in the throne—they would both be inspected by officers of high rank, who, seeing both, would make such reports and take such measures as to keep drills, exercises, discipline, and dress in harmony. Not that the armies need necessarily be dressed alike, though we have more to learn from India than India has from us, but there may be harmony of ideas without exact imitation. The point to reach is a double recruiting: of short service, not more than three years, for home; and long service, not more than ten years, for India and the colonies. The men who choose to enlist for long service at first should be



allowed to do so, and also those who, having been a short time in the ranks at home, volunteer to take service with the foreign arm of long service. Each foreign battalion would have its own depôt, and no longer worry the home battalion by drawing away its men as soon as they are a little trained. Then at last could take place that localization which, so much talked of, can never be effected so long as the present system of reliefs keeps up an almost perpetual motion among the various units. The regiments might recruit in their own counties, and remain generally in the midst of their own reserve men, who would be assisted in finding places according to their known capacities. A thousand much desired reforms could be undertaken and brought to a good end, which are now despaired of because they do not fit in with the "system of reliefs." For this system there is not a word to be said, except that it is old, and was suited for a period when colonies in a state of simmering rebellion had to be watched, and the colonists were so generally right that the soldiers, if kept there too long, might transfer their virtual allegiance to the colonies from the Crown.

There has never been a time when plenty of men could not be got for good pay and increased chances of adventure. On the other hand, a steady working home army would get rid of nine-tenths of the prejudices which now cause parents of the respectable classes to view with horror the enlistment of a son. The best agents for recruiting would be the regiments themselves in their own counties, and use would be made of local attachments. Mobilization would become as easy and be as well carried out as in Germany itself, and

regular regiments would take a place in the daily life of the districts like that which the volunteers take now. The freedom of exchange among officers should be as great as possible, practically unlimited. Such an organization, implying as it would short service for the men, though not a cast-iron system, would undoubtedly give a little more trouble to the regimental officers than they have at present. They would have to become more professional, and give more instruction themselves. But such a development of military education would be far from constituting an unmixed evil; indeed, it is already called for by the pressing needs of modern war.

Every military writer of repute holds the opinion that the necessity for thorough tactical knowledge comes down much lower in armies than it used to do, and that even non-commissioned officers must now be able to handle small bodies of troops with a tactical insight which used to be looked on as the attribute of generals only, or of senior officers acting as such. The whole system of modern fighting seems now to be based upon the principle of subdivision into very small units, each of which, in attack or defence, should have a capable leader, even if he be but a corporal. The latest French regulations for infantry attack are very clear upon this score, and one of the points most strongly insisted upon by Lord Wolseley is the necessity for revising the English infantry exercises in the same sense. Instead of the drills which have hitherto formed the total amount of military knowledge with which an officer must show his practical acquaint-

ance, there must now be constant practice in field manœuvres, and no officer should be promoted until he has shown that he and the men whom he commands are fully competent to perform skilful work before an enemy. But, in order to attain this amount of perfection, the instruction, both of young officers and of men, must be carried further and be more unremitting than at present.

It is notorious that Lord Wolseley thinks our system of drill far too complicated, and many of the officers unfitted, by their habits and want of training, to lead soldiers with that skill which modern war requires, and I find the same opinion prevalent among all the most distinguished British officers of our time. Lord Chelmsford ascribed the disaster of Isandhlwana to the want of military precautions which ought to have been taken; and it is only too well known that when Sir Herbert Stewart's little column arrived at the Nile, having lost in killed and wounded the two or three most competent officers, it was considered so lacking in leadership that Sir Redvers Buller had to be sent to command it. Yet this column contained the very flower of the British army. It is equally well known that a despatch from Lord Wolseley expressed a strong sense of the want of knowledge among some of his commanding officers, and only a few months ago we had published in all the papers that extraordinary piece of criticism in which the Commander-in-Chief declared that during his inspections he had remarked a great want of skill in executing the most elementary details of tactics, such as outpost duties and *reconnaissance*. Yet the public was not at all moved by

the state of military ignorance thus laid bare, nor have I heard that the Government has taken any measures to plant military education on a firmer and more satisfactory basis. When my critics call me pessimist, I am inclined to ask them what they think of a condition of military preparation in which the officers of the army are charged by the highest authority with what can only be characterized as remarkable ignorance of their profession.

In the preceding chapter I showed the sort of training which a German officer undergoes and which he passes on to the non-commissioned officers and men. It is said that the English officer cannot be expected to give so much time and attention to these practical studies under present conditions, and those conditions are alleged to be that public opinion and "society" do not favour a professional military spirit; that military life is expensive and the pay of young officers comparatively so small that it has to be supplemented by at least an equal amount of private fortune; that there are not, as in Continental countries, special privileges attached to military rank; that the prizes of the army are too few to compensate the young and lively lieutenant for the toils which he must undergo in his study to become thoroughly efficient in a professional sense; and that, in consequence, the English officer holds that he gives his services almost gratuitously, and is justified in laying down for himself that proportion between work and play which suits his convenience and his taste. Doubtless the brave and gallant young gentlemen of whom I am speaking will exclaim in astonishment that their life is made a burden

to them by examination-demons, who seize upon them in the cradle of their military career and cling to them to the end. Let them be at peace so far as I am concerned! From all the information which reaches me I am inclined to think that theoretical examinations are very much overdone, while the work in the field, which is of infinitely more practical importance, and much more interesting, is left to be learnt in battle, where the enormous difference between the trained and the untrained officer will be felt. The training in India is on a more practical footing than that which prevails at home, and, evidently, there are some home influences detrimental to military efficiency.

Baron von der Goltz has some pregnant passages with regard to officers in his book, *The Nation in Arms*. He quotes Rüchel, who said, "The soul of the Prussian army is in its officers." He points out that it is required of an officer that, in the interest of the service, he should forego personal advantage and prosperity. "Hence only such men as are not, by reason of their vocation, compelled to prefer personal advantage to public ends are fitting persons to recruit the corps of officers." . . . . "It ought to be a chivalry." . . . . "Influence over the soldiers must be gained in time of peace by a proper application of the superior qualities of intellect and character in training and leading them." By showing that he is self-sacrificing the officer awakens noble impulses in the soldier's breast, and only by these can great deeds be done. "To the officer class there is accordingly due a favoured position in the

State." "Without social privileges the officer class must of necessity soon sink down to a modest level, for in civil life it is property that determines social rank, and our officers are, thank God! in the majority of cases, as poor as church mice."

Now it is a well-founded boast of Great Britain and her colonies that we possess a very large class indeed from which the best of officers could be drawn. So wide is the opportunity for selection that we might impose almost any tests we pleased on candidates for commissions, and yet the lists would be full. I am, however, a little afraid that our English officer class is becoming rather too luxurious. The officers are tempted and even driven by society to practise in their mess entertainments, and in their daily life, extravagances which would only befit men of large fortune. Von der Goltz is pleased at the thought that the German officers are for the most part as poor as church mice; the tendency of English officers of the present day to think much of money and to live upon private fortunes, altogether irrespective of their military pay, has much to do with the difficulty which everybody finds when calling upon the regimental officer to study his profession in the same sense that a barrister, a doctor, or even a merchant, must do. It is not well that officers should be too independent of their profession. It is not well that society should think a regiment good or bad according to the style of its entertainments and the amount of money spent upon them; and it is worse than all that society should interfere, as it constantly does by its influence, with that discipline which

would lead us to insist on full military knowledge being exacted from all who bear the Queen's commission. We have an immense number of military examinations, but it is a remarkable fact that the examiners of officers are not those in immediate command of them, but some unknown individuals, too frequently belonging to the class of those who, to use other words of Von der Goltz, have freed themselves from the "burden of splendid misery," often without ever having seen real war, and eke out in retirement a barely gained subsistence by selecting questions out of text-books after they have long lost touch with the military life.

The same tale comes to me from so many quarters that I cannot doubt its truth. Some of the text-books are said to be about the worst that have ever been written on the subjects they profess to teach, and the examiners are confined strictly to the books. What is the English equivalent of that constant practical work in the field which forms the examination for promotion in Germany? Written questions and answers out of a very indifferent treatise on tactics, and out of a book called, I believe, the *Infantry Field Exercise*, which Lord Wolseley has publicly pronounced to be as bad as it can well be. If all this be true—and my information on the point seems exact—it would be of little use to demand that officers should train their men, since their own training has been pronounced deficient by the highest authority in the land, and the very nature and scope of their studies and examinations are equally unpractical and deficient. To put the case shortly, a Royal Commission found the officers of the army ignorant of their

profession, and recommended that they should be instructed at any cost. Ever since that day they have been in a condition of perpetual examination out of books, like Chinese mandarins, but the nature of the books and of the examinations has been such that, for practical purposes, they might as well have studied the wisdom of Confucius. In saying this I do not speak without authority, but the best of all proofs is that only a few months ago the Commander-in-Chief felt himself obliged to promulgate an order couched in such terms as to be a sweeping condemnation of the whole apparatus of military education. It was also a condemnation of the generals in command of districts, for, whatever military education may be, generals who know their own responsibility can hardly shuffle off upon Garrison Instructors, or even the Director General of Military Education, the whole duty and responsibility of seeing that staff and regimental officers are capable of performing the simplest functions of leaders in war. I have inquired, but cannot find that the censure of the Duke of Cambridge has had any effect, either in the substitution of more capable commanders, or in the increased activity of such as we possess. On the other hand, His Royal Highness is a total disbeliever in the possibility of promotion by selection on account of superior capacity, and is known to think and to privately say that "one officer is much the same as another."

Since Lord Randolph Churchill struck terror into the heart of the present Government, a Committee has been appointed to go over the whole subject of military education, not, however, with instructions to improve it, but to



see if something cannot be cut off here and there. Regimental schools for non-commissioned officers and men are to disappear, and, on the whole, not without reason, for the effect of the Board-school training is beginning to be apparent among the recruits, most of whom can now read and write when they join the ranks. It may be sufficient if, under these conditions, garrison schools should be retained for those who have not been, but wish to be, taught the elements of education. The weakness of military education is not to be gauged by the prevalence of reading, writing, and arithmetic in the ranks, but by the ignorance of the men of their daily duties in war. Any knowledge which teaches a man's brain to act is useful for the soldier; but I do not see why he should not be taught to think during his daily training in peace. The drill-books as at present constituted, I am told, are calculated to destroy the rudiments of thought. It is said that tactical exercises as now practised in all great Continental armies are especially designed to make both non-commissioned officers and soldiers think; but the British army cannot be trained in such a manner; all attempts of the kind are discouraged by the authorities. The more a seeker after efficiency tries to discover the why and the wherefore of that contradiction between public criticism of bad work and virtual repression of good which we have noticed, the thicker does the fog become, until at last it can only be surmised that there are two natures, two consciences, and two habits of thought and action here at work; in short, that the governing intelligence of the

army is sometimes that of Dr. Jekyll and sometimes that of Mr. Hyde.

The next question is that of mobilization. Is the army in a state to take the field quickly in case of war, thoroughly prepared for a campaign? Some good work has lately been done in that direction, but also some evil in the name of this good principle, and the enthusiasm which my critic in *Blackwood* calls upon me to exhibit under penalty of the lash, is difficult to produce in the face of what everybody—Lord Wolseley now included—seems to consider the grand mistake of reducing horse and field artillery in order to produce ammunition columns. Nor can I help returning to the fact that a much larger and more elaborate scheme was laid down a few years ago, and based entirely on the principle that certain cadres and certain material would be forthcoming, which they never were. The old scheme was to have a double base. On one hand the greatest possible use was to be made of the militia and volunteers for home defence, and field artillery was to be provided where it was lacking. On the other hand one or two army corps were to be organized for foreign service if a counter-attack had to be made. At the time when this scheme was first designed, the idea of preparation for war was popular, for the echoes of the fall of France had not died away. An increase of the artillery was expected, for men recalled the exclamation of the defeated Emperor, "It is your artillery which has beaten us."

Though Lord Cardwell went out, and other ministers succeeded each other at the War Office, and though the

organization of the two corps for active service abroad was postponed until the struggle for mastery between the Horse Guards and War Office could be settled, the whole of the home forces were organized to resist invasion, with the understanding that the regular field artillery would be largely increased, and the engineers to a less extent. The troops required for garrisons were told off to their places, and the rest detailed to their positions for active service in eight army corps. The exact method of calling out and sending every man clothed and armed to his appointed place was arranged, the coasts and inland country were surveyed, and all the defensive positions marked and the best way of defending them explained. Not only this, but the arrangements for sending an army corps or two anywhere by sea were worked out and placed on record:—arrangements which were disregarded in one of their most vital particulars when the Egyptian campaign took place in 1882. I am told on authority which I cannot doubt that it had been decided as a principle that every unit should be complete in its own ship so as to land ready for an advance, and not, as in former days, troops in one ship and their transport in another. Yet in 1882 the old plan was reverted to, with results disastrous to the rapid mobility of the army. A part of the scheme of mobilization was that the requisite stores should be always ready, as they are in every other European country. In fact the whole forces were to be levelled up to something like a satisfactory condition for home defence and a counter-stroke against the enemy. I do not say that the arrangements were the best that could have been devised; perhaps

they were not. At any rate they were those which could be carried at the time, and proposers of other methods patriotically supported the one which had a chance of acceptance. But the extra field batteries were not created, nor the ammunition columns, nor were the stores provided and set in their proper places. The Admiralty did, I believe, carry out much of the task appointed to them, because Admiral Mends was an active participator in the scheme of transport by sea and remained long enough at the Admiralty to insure the practical execution of the work. But the War Office either could not or would not create the necessary cadres or provide the stores.

What has been done now? The organizers of the new scheme have had to recognize that no attempt could be fruitful if it aimed at the slightest approach to meeting our real requirements. The old scheme was an effort to level up, the new one is based on a process of levelling down. If the old one showed what the forces ought to be and might be, thus offering a high condition of efficiency to be aimed at, the new scheme shows the most that can be done by what I called, "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Its authors are no doubt just as able and just as patriotic as the authors of the old scheme, and being so, cannot be and are not satisfied with their work except as a foundation on which to build. Their scheme is also based on army corps, and they have carried out on paper the idea of having two army corps ready to be sent abroad, but for this purpose all chance of producing a defensive army at the same time is sacrificed. I can tell, almost as if I had been present, what took place.

The authorities represented to the Secretary of State the desperate unreadiness of the army and its absolute want of all means of mobilization. In reply the War Minister assured them that he quite saw their point, but they must distinctly understand that if they wanted one thing they must reduce another, for Lord Randolph Churchill would upset the Government unless they cut down the Estimates. The soldiers accepted, though with vexation in their hearts, and only accepted because it is better to have two corps ready than none at all. But it may be taken as certain that they remain seriously uneasy as to the military position of the country. They think that the navy cannot be everywhere, and that under certain quite possible, and even probable, combinations Great Britain might be stripped of some of her possessions, and that London might be taken, and all be lost in the treaty which would ensue. I should find it hard to believe that they have not formally put the fact on record that under the new organization we are not so strong as we ought to be for offensive-defensive, or even for purely defensive warfare.

The two army corps will not be ready in any sense until the stores are provided, which, remembering the past, will always seem doubtful of accomplishment; nor can they possibly be mobilized till the proposed arrangements for securing horses are in full working order. The horse question too was considered in the old mobilization scheme, but the promises made were not accomplished, and those made now may also not be fulfilled. In the meantime our cavalry are, mainly from want of horses, terribly short even

of the supposed numbers, as has been well shown by Major-General Keith Fraser in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review*. The necessary ammunition columns are, as we know, to be formed, but only by the destruction of fourteen batteries. I understand that, as before, certain ports are to be selected where portions of the army corps are to be embarked, and on the whole the principles of the scheme seem uncommonly like those of the old one, with the sole difference that instead of aiming at the highest possible efficiency by levelling up, we are now accepting the lowest, which is that attainable under the supposed condition of a cabinet terrified by Lord Randolph Churchill. Thus it is that I cannot work myself up to the required point of enthusiasm, even for Mr. Smith, and I fear that I must remain liable to assault by my *Blackwood* critic, "in season and out of season" too. I may none the less rejoice that at least a small portion of the national forces are likely before long to be capable of mobilization. To that extent I am, in common with other students of the question, grateful to those who have done good work up to this point.

No one should be content, however, till the whole of the forces are put on a proper footing, till sufficient field guns are provided, capable of being horsed and manœuvred against an enemy, and, to be short, until the organization, the equipment, and the training of regulars and auxiliary forces are all designed to produce an army ready for war at any time. It appears to me absurd and humiliating that we should proclaim our incapacity to solve problems which have been answered satisfac-

torily by almost every other nation—extremely careless that we should have spent large sums on fortifications and guns, yet never have a single fortress in a state to defend itself against a modern enemy, and should keep up large forces of militia and volunteers which we treat as of hardly any value for war. If, as has been explained to the country, less than half the volunteers would be available in case of national danger—an opinion which I do not share—then we should understand who are the men composing the good half and not keep up the rest in time of peace. If the militia and the volunteers cannot procure officers enough under present circumstances, we should alter the circumstances till they can. Army, militia, or volunteers, whatever the force we pay for, it should be able to take the field. There is a crucial test which may be applied. It is well known that some £300,000 must be voted if the two army corps are to be capable of mobilization; and that our great fortresses are utterly indefensible for want of some three millions sterling. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes off taxes it will be at the cost of national safety;\* but I read the distinct declaration of the Under-Secretary of State for War, in his recent speech, to mean that the Government intend to discharge that which he called "their patriotic and obvious duty."

Let me once more try to impress upon my readers that, humanly speaking, we can trust for our protection in the

\* All my doubts have been confirmed. Mr. Stanhope now confesses that even the first corps is not quite ready, and the second not nearly so. Neither is there yet any satisfactory means of providing horses. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken off a penny.

last resort only to our own strong arm. I understand that Lord Salisbury thinks that war will break out soon, and that he doubts whether we shall ourselves be able to keep clear of it, although he denies that he has come under any engagement to the Central Powers. In my belief, however, a greater danger than that of our becoming involved in a general war is that of our sooner or later having to fight in a quarrel of our own without allies. It might be possible no doubt to protect ourselves, as a rule, by accepting the advice of my critics in *Blackwood* and in the *Edinburgh Review*, and entering on a close alliance with Italy, Germany, and Austria; but it is doubtful whether this policy would not ultimately result in a general peace being made in Europe at our expense and our being left to bear in India the brunt of the hostility of Russia. These speculations have, however, no importance in face of the undoubted fact that Lord Salisbury's understanding with the Central Powers is of a limited kind. The *Edinburgh* reviewer and the *Blackwood* writer themselves acknowledge that a mere understanding is insufficient, and that if Russia, finding it impossible, on account of the alliances of Austria and Germany, to move in Europe, were to determine to attack us in Asia, no mere understanding with Continental nations would give us an ally in the field, and we should have to fight alone. As Lord Salisbury has declined, upon a full view of all the circumstances, to make a complete alliance with the Central Powers, the necessity for us to be in a position to defend ourselves in India single-handed, and to fight Russia without allies, continues. It is still the case



that even with an alliance with the Central Powers we should be exposed to the risk of those Powers, when the time came for a quarrel between us and France upon a colonial question, or between us and Russia about Afghanistan, leaving us in the lurch; but it is unnecessary to consider this point in face of the fact that no general and complete alliance has been made or is likely to be made either by Lord Salisbury or by the Liberals.

The two policies have been before Lord Salisbury, who was driven to make up his mind between them by his own expectation that there will be a war. He has decided that England will best consult her interests by holding aloof from general engagements and by relying upon her own resources, and upon the chances of a temporary alliance upon certain questions. But, as our present resources have been shown to be inadequate to the demands which will probably be made upon them, the importance of immediate attention to my subject is made apparent. The *Blackwood* writer has proved that we should be in a position in certain eventualities to defend Italy against France, and therefore that our alliance is worth having for the Central Powers; but what matters to ourselves is the converse question of how far we can count upon the Central Powers for the defence of London and the coaling-stations against France, or of India against Russia. Lord Salisbury has made his decision, and has told the ambassadors that, while it is his policy to maintain the *status quo* and to sympathize with those who fight for its maintenance, he has come under no definite engagement. If this is true, which we must assume,

it is the more necessary that we should be able to help ourselves.

In the first two chapters we surveyed the present position of the British army, in the third we examined together the system of a model modern army, and in the present chapter we have seen how far the theory upon which our own military affairs are conducted can be said to constitute a system. In the next chapter we shall have to discuss the ideal of a British army, and to see how far the ideal is capable of realization.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE IDEAL OF A BRITISH ARMY.

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I HAVE now sketched the principal features of the typical Continental system, which is organized with a view of being always ready for war, because war is constantly before the eyes of the Continental nations, and, in the last chapter, have attempted to portray that British "system" which is the result of a general easy-going belief that by some means or other the British Empire will manage to hold its envied position in the world without ever having to fight for it. I now propose to set forth reasons why we cannot wisely copy the Continental systems, excellent as they are in some respects, and then to try to discover what ought to be the principles of British organization for war, supposing that a free hand were given to Ministers, as in France after the collapse of 1870-71, when the old army had practically been destroyed and the nation was prepared for a radical reconstruction of its military power. Let not serious readers be led astray by any statements to the effect that I am over-sanguine or theoretical. In this chapter I

propose to refrain altogether from expressing an opinion as to what can be done and ought to be done at once, and to confine myself as strictly as I can to the discussion of principles, and of fundamental differences between British and Continental necessities and means, and to the construction of an ideal towards which we should steadily move. I am well aware that such a course is open to misconstruction, and must plead that I am writing for those who do not wish to misconstrue my words, but wish rather to take them for what they are worth; to "read, not to contradict or refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider," according to the attitude recommended by Lord Bacon to all wise men—an attitude sadly uncommon in times of party struggles. There are some controversies which ought to be kept outside the limits of party, and the protection of our interests at home and abroad is a subject which should be discussed without heat being imported into the discussion.

The first and most important difference between the British Empire and a great Continental Power is that we have many vital spots, while a Continental Power has practically only one. To break down the resistance of France or Germany its armies must be met and defeated and the soil occupied; probably even the capital. There has been as yet no collision between two "armed nations," but it would seem as if the limit of defence could only be reached when either the resources or the courage of one side have been completely exhausted. The British Empire, on the contrary, may be bled to death in India or in the

defence of the colonies; or by the capture of coaling-stations its steam fleet might be rendered useless—a catastrophe which would involve the partial starving of the mother country. The proof of this has often been given, but may be re-stated here. The United Kingdom cannot nearly feed itself, and is dependent on food brought by steamships, which would in war have to be guarded by a steam navy. Hitherto we have had almost a monopoly of the coaling stations of the world, without which no steam vessel can keep the sea. With the loss of those coaling stations would go the power of providing food for the home population; and therefore the coaling stations, even now not fully prepared for defence, are vital spots in the British Empire. It is eminently unpractical to say that they would be defended by the fleet. If there is one point upon which all strategists are agreed it is that success, either of fleets or armies, should be sought in concentration, not dispersion; and one need not be a professional soldier or sailor to see that the power of concentration is thrown away if vital land positions all over the world are at the mercy of an enemy unless some portion of the British fleet be detached to guard each one of them. It may also be taken for granted that in case of war with a maritime Power there will be an outcry for an overwhelmingly strong fleet in the home waters; and when to such squadrons we add the number of ships of war which will be requisite to guard the chief trade routes by which supplies of food will come, and consider the doubt that exists as to the possibility of blockading an enemy's ports now that ships of war, though stronger than

of old, are and must be comparatively few, we recognize that it will be difficult indeed to find vessels sufficient for the duty of guarding coaling stations, even if dispersion for that service were not a grievous strategical fault. Yet all correspondents who write to me on the condition both of coaling stations and great sea-fortresses such as Gibraltar and Malta, or even Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Dover, assert that these vital depositories of British power are in their present condition absolutely dependent on the presence of no inconsiderable portion of the fleet.

Lord Randolph Churchill was right in his statement that large sums have been spent on constructing fortresses which are not yet either finished or armed. His proposal, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, was to stop expenditure upon them and the coaling-stations. My remedy would be to finish and arm them as rapidly as possible, thus setting free the fleet, and securing for the ocean squadrons places where they might run for safety, for replenishment of fuel and stores, and for refitment. This is perhaps the first of all our needs. Until the great sea-fortresses and the coaling stations are completely fortified, armed, and, I may add with respect to those not in the United Kingdom, garrisoned, they are sources of weakness rather than strength. By their helplessness they invite attack, and chain down so large a proportion of the fleet as to leave the greatest maritime nation weak at sea. All the authorities are agreed on this point, and are nervously anxious that the work should be pushed on with all haste. It is one of many collateral proofs of the dangerous neglect which has

characterized our naval and military affairs for many years, that such a condition of things should have been suffered to exist so long.

My first condition for an ideal British organization would, therefore, be freedom of the fleet from the calls of local defence. The maritime fortresses and coaling stations should all be capable of defending themselves, and should become aids to the navy, instead of burdens on its resources, as they are at present. For this purpose they should be supplied with the newest artillery, not with guns which are already nearly obsolete, and will be wholly useless as time goes on ; for it is clear that any attacks made upon them will be carried out by ships armed with guns of the longest range. There is no time to spare, and the three millions or so which the work would cost would provide rallying places both for the royal navy and the merchant fleet, and, by setting free a large number of men-of-war, would be practically equivalent to a considerable increase of the navy for war purposes. Until this work has been brought to a conclusion the heavy expenditure which has been incurred up to this time on fortifications has been of no avail. Lord Randolph Churchill once spoke of it as wasted to such an extent that it might as well have been thrown into the sea. Like many of the noble lord's utterances, this statement was more rhetorical than exact. We do not say that a man has wasted all the money spent on building a house because the roof is not yet on. But if he leaves it without a roof the money is wasted, and that waste is just what Lord Randolph Churchill's action in stopping supplies tends to

bring about. It lies in the power of the present Government to put the roof on if they will. But if they leave the work unfinished, and the house remains incomplete when war comes upon us, I am afraid that the fortresses and coaling stations may be branded hereafter as "Randolph's Folly."

Whence are the garrisons of these coaling stations and fortresses to come? Should we, always looking to an ideal, aim at increasing the British infantry and artillery to meet the wants of every new spot which we fortify because of its vital necessity? On the contrary, I should like to see a development of the principle that every part of the Queen's dominions owes some contribution to the defence of the Empire, either in purse or in the person of the citizens. Canada has set an example in adopting a law of general service; Australia, New Zealand, and other colonies have their volunteers. In some way or other the bulk of the garrisons should always be provided in the colonies by local troops, which would not have to give their whole time, or anything like it, to soldiering, provided always that there were a nucleus of well-instructed men and plenty of thoroughly efficient officers. By the last term I do not mean officers who have spent their lives in routine duties, passing examinations for promotion out of books, thinking every parade "a bore"—as indeed it somehow is made at present—and leaving the instruction of the men to be carried out by adjutants, sergeants-major, and junior non-commissioned officers. I do not, in short, mean the officer of the "society" novel, because the ideal of such society seems to be for the officer a total absence of all intellectual qualities—the



brain-power of a primeval ancestor and the habits of a game-keeper. There are plenty of officers of a better type than this in the army, and a frank acceptance of the principle of promotion by selection would produce plenty more, especially if with it we accepted the principle of having a large staff of officers always in training for emergencies and for the managing of new military organizations all over the world. We are obliged to base our home military organization on the garrisoning of fortresses in war chiefly by militia and volunteers, but we admit that what we pleasantly style "the reserve forces" have neither sufficient officers numerically nor, as a rule, officers sufficiently well instructed. For home garrisons we should need an influx of trained officers to be the backbone of the defence in war, and this would be an even more pressing want for colonies and for coaling stations. The Mediterranean fortresses stand on a rather different footing, and I entirely agree with Lord Wolseley that they should always have garrisons of good troops complete in all respects and ready for war, not only for their own defence, but also because they are the nearest centres from which might be drawn immediate, if inconsiderable, reinforcements for Egypt, so long as we try to hold it, and for the East. Malta has already some local troops, and if Gibraltar should be threatened it is difficult to see what could be done with the civil population unless they were brought under military discipline, though some will smile at the idea of utilizing the services of the "Rock Scorpions." The garrison of Bermuda would have to be almost entirely British; but wherever there is a large British

or colonial society which must be defended, a considerable portion, in fact the chief part of the garrison for war, should, according to my ideal, be drawn either, as volunteers or by general service, from the community itself. It would be necessary always to have a few trained soldiers, especially artillerymen, to take care of the material in peace and to act as instructors and, so to say, foremen in war. Where civil engineers do not exist, engineer officers also would be required, and of course some infantry instructors for the drill of the colonial levies or volunteers. A full supply of arms should always be present; but though the first supply of arms, or a subsequent complete renewal, is a heavy item of expenditure, the average cost per annum is very small. In this, as in other branches of human economy, neglect for a series of years has to be remedied in a short time and at great cost.

My second ideal principle, then, would be to look to local help for all garrisons where that system is possible, we retaining always a large staff of specially well-trained officers for the purpose of organizing and commanding local levies in war.

As this is one of my principal points, and as it runs counter to natural prejudices, I must enlarge a little on the need for having a superabundant supply of officers, instead of remaining content under the deficiency on that head which now exists, and to which I have drawn attention. It is a fact that the army never has its full complement of officers, though that complement has been set at as low a figure as possible; and the various courses of instruction,

such as musketry, signalling, gymnastics, garrison classes, and the like, remove so many from their ordinary regimental duties that no battalion, battery, or regiment of cavalry ever has its proper number of officers present with it unless by pure chance. I believe that were I to say "never" I should not exaggerate. Somehow or other the notion seems to have spread that all special knowledge is to be obtained away from the regiment, in some other regiment or school. One of the results is that the everyday instruction of the men suffers, and that the touch between officers and men in daily life is less close than it ought to be. The British officer is, I doubt not, better taught than he used to be, but the regiments suffer to a certain extent, and, at any rate, there is plenty of room for more officers without overcrowding the battalions, the squadrons, and especially the batteries, because artillery officers have so many scientific courses, while their number in the battery, when at full strength, is small.

Although the War Office is, when compared with foreign War Offices, monstrously overmanned, and is forced to adhere to centralization in order to find itself work, such staff organizations as the Intelligence Department are undermanned, and could usefully employ many more officers than they possess, to the great benefit of those officers and of the service. I do not think it at all necessary that these officers should have extra pay, provided only that ability and hard work are made to command promotion. There are certain positions involving special responsibilities, and certain staff appointments, which should always be well paid, and considered as the prizes of the profession. Let there be enough of them

to be worth competing for, and there will be no need to give extra pay to those officers who may be said to be competing. I am told that the Duke of Cambridge objects to the principle of unpaid appointments of any kind, and there seems little doubt that it would inevitably lead to promotion by selection, which His Royal Highness does not favour. But there are already cases involving the same principle. The students of the Staff College and other educational institutions compete for the right to enter, work hard while undergoing the course, and do not expect higher pay till, later on, they arrive, after further natural selection, at some of the prizes of the profession. A small allowance in travelling expenses is found sufficient to attract officers to study difficult languages, such as Russian, Turkish, and Arabic, and to reside for considerable periods where they can obtain colloquial practice. It is probable that employment, either in London or in foreign countries, on service upon which officers of all armies are employed, would be as popular as it would be valuable for the nation, even though nothing were paid except bare extra expenses.

In these and in various other ways a large number of additional officers might be kept really at work while the regimental units remained full, and in such working order as they have not known for a long time. On the other hand, the list of general officers might well be weeded of those who are recognized as never likely to be selected for commands in war or responsible positions in peace. It is altogether absurd, and approaches the scandalous, that officers who are acknowledged to be hopelessly incompe-

tent should not only be retained on the lists, but should even be promoted if they have happened to hold a command in some little war, no matter how badly they performed their duties. The officers we should keep at any cost, and encourage by promotion and by giving them important duties in peace, are those who would be likely to be selected for critical duties in time of war; and we ought to take a great deal of trouble to form a body of such men, and to employ them on duties outside the ordinary routine. In war they would be nothing less than invaluable.

Promotion by selection ought to be the rule and not the exception for advancement in the higher ranks. About the lower ranks there is much doubt, because opportunity for showing capacity, knowledge, and professional zeal, may often be wanting to the younger officers, and their characters too are not fully developed. If a man on attaining field rank knew that, if not certainly, at least probably, his work in that rank would determine his future career, he would be provided with a stimulus of the most powerful kind. Men often now after much hard work, with a good deal of experience and special knowledge, see the time of retirement approaching. If they are rich they doubt the wisdom of continuing to work at a period of life when possibly their health begins to need some care. If they are poor they may see openings for employment in civil life. The chance of sudden promotion by merit, giving them a prospect beyond what would otherwise be the age for their retirement, might in many cases make a great difference to them and induce them to go on. It is saddening to read letters from officers who

do not see the wisdom of what they call "grinding away any longer" in a position rendered hopeless by the certainty of compulsory retirement in a few years' time. Another effect of the present system is to exclude poor men from the senior ranks, as they cannot afford to wait on half pay for employment, and have also much temptation to leave the service and seek employment elsewhere. Favouritism and interest no doubt are formidable foes to real promotion by selection, but I think that it is the opinion of the army generally that anything is better than hopelessness, and that the publicity of the present day will prevent gross jobbery.

It is evident that a number of such choice spirits as I should like to see always ready to direct in peace and to lead in war must be selected by some means or other, and I find a general agreement that the selection cannot be made by mere examination in book-learning. Common sense ought to have a voice in the matter, and for the actual process of selection we might do worse than carry out to its full development the German principle of selection by what may be called everyday tests. Germany has but one standard to aim at: full competence to lead troops in ordinary civilized war. The British standard must include a great deal more. The ideal British officer would be one who, while well trained in the ways of civilized warfare, is equally competent for such work as Gordon did in China, or that which officers of native cavalry in India are doing every day. The quality is inherent in the race, and cannot be stamped out of it even by the over-routine which charac-

*See page 15*  
*200!*

terizes our home service. I cannot see why we should regard German efficiency as the highest ideal. We do not admit German equality in sportsmanship or in Alpine climbing, nor do we concede German superiority in the art of travel, all of them pursuits requiring the same qualities that are needed for officers; and excellent as German officers are, I am not at all sure that they could either have built up the Empire of Hindostan or borne the tremendous strain of the Indian Mutiny.

On the other hand, it may be true that our officers needed the preparation for regular war which has been given since the mutiny by instruction of various kinds; but I doubt whether book-learning and book examinations are not occupying too large a space in the minds of the Military Educational Department. My ideal examinations would for the most part be of a practical kind, and the officer would be called upon to do in the mimic field what at present he is required to write upon a piece of paper. It is said that the difficulty would be to find examiners competent to judge; but, if this be true, it seems to me that the sooner we eliminate the incompetent officers of superior rank the better. There must be at least a few who are competent, and I cannot conceive an ideal army in which the competent men would not be put at the head of military instruction and examination as of everything else. It is comforting to see that such exercises as night marches and attacks are about to be practised. We are getting on towards my ideal instruction, but I cannot forget that all these manœuvres were already common in France and Russia some

years ago. We seem to follow the Continental armies at rather a long interval, instead of estimating our own needs and taking a line of our own in military education.

The difference between our military requirements and those of Continental nations is very striking when we come to consider the general organization of the forces. Just as, according to Professor Seeley, we gained the position of the greatest colonial Power and the command of the seas in a fit of absence of mind, so we seem determined to hold our possessions without troubling ourselves much about how the grasp is to be retained. There is a good healthy confidence in our own resources and our power to meet evils when they come; but over-confidence when it leads to carelessness is nothing more nor less than folly. We live too much on traditions of the past, and do not take sufficient note of the progress made by other nations in preparation for war. Our hold on India affects our military situation in a degree which it is impossible to over-estimate. India requires a great army to act as a garrison and to guard its frontiers, and a large portion of that army—some 70,000 men or more—has to be recruited from home. So far, India is a source of weakness. But on the other side there is the fact that India not only pays for all this army and a still larger native force, but may, and does under certain circumstances, contribute to the general defence of the Empire and to the power of acquiring fresh territory. Thus India is a source not only of weakness but of strength. If India were gone from us to-morrow we should lose that portion of the Imperial and native army for which she pays, and, on the whole, we



should be weaker for the change, even if our Eastern trade continued to be as great as now, which it certainly would not.

There is a sense, however, in which our Asiatic possessions are a source of weakness here at home. There is not the slightest doubt that while we dream away the possibility of European complications involving us in war and perhaps invasion, we believe in danger to India, and our whole system of organization for the regular army at home is built upon the necessity of keeping up our Indian forces. Home defence is made subordinate to Indian defence, and we run the risk of having large and growing extremities but a weak heart. We know—but we do not act upon the knowledge—that a blow at the heart would destroy British imperial life in the extremities. There was a moment when France incurred a danger of the same kind. The occupation of Tunis caused a serious upsetting of the home organization, and so compromised the whole system of mobilization that a German attack would have been fatal. But the danger was recognized as existing, and was so felt by the Chambers and the nation that proposals were at once brought forward for forming a separate long-service colonial army outside the home organization, and having no influence upon the system of mobilization for European war. Tunis quieted down and the plan was not carried out, but it is not likely that France, or indeed any other Power, will ever again so risk home safety. Italy has taken care to protect herself against a like danger, and has resolved that her occupation of Massowah shall not in any way interfere with her system of mobilization. The ideal

British army should enable us to do the same. India and the colonies should not be allowed to affect home organization and mobilization. There is nothing like our Asiatic Empire belonging to any other European Powers, and the military means which are suitable for them cannot, it seems to me, be suitable for us. The ideal British organization, having a double object and a double danger, should have separate arrangements, which should be able to meet either of the dangers separately or both at the same time. No Continental Power has this difficulty to face.

The word "separate" startles even men of robust character, such as Lord Wolseley and Sir Frederick Roberts. They, notwithstanding, seem both of them inclined to advocate the principles which I hold to be those which should govern the military organization of the Empire, as represented by the forces in Europe on the one hand, in Asia on the other. Both those distinguished officers agree with me that a long-service army is necessary for Asiatic warfare, and that a short-service army with large reserves would best serve our turn at home. I must explain that by the word "separate" I do not mean, nor does anybody else mean, so far as I know, in these days, two armies not tied by any bonds to each other, or not ready and able to succour each other in time of war. There should be permitted free exchange between officers, and transfers by consent of those transferred. In this, as in other matters which we shall come to presently, I would advocate even more freedom than now exists,—the greatest possible freedom of service consistent with proper discharge of duty.

Why should an officer of the Indian Staff Corps be debarred from changing his service for that of home regiments if his health suffers from a prolonged residence in hot countries, or an improvement in his fortunes invites him home? And why should an officer of the Home Army not be allowed at any period of his career to join the Indian forces, either British or native? The services as they exist are more "separate" in these respects than I would make them. Again, I do not see why private soldiers or non-commissioned officers whose time in India has expired should not join the home reserve forces of one kind or another, provided the men are reported sound in constitution. If service is to be voluntary, let us be a little bolder in carrying out the principle of voluntary service.

In using the word "separate" my meaning is simply this. It is recognized on all hands that short service is unsuitable for India, and long service for the United Kingdom and perhaps the Mediterranean. The perpetual movement of troops which takes place is very expensive, prevents all local associations, and renders decentralization difficult, if not impossible. The present system has been outgrown by the advance of national life and the increased responsibilities of our position in the world. The whole country is sick of the muddle in which the attempt to reconcile conflicting necessities and make impossibilities possible has landed us. For all these reasons we are driven to take a new departure, with new principles of organization. The mother principle should in my opinion be decentralization, which would give birth to a true localization, and the

cultivation of those habits of self-government within the organization which have been in civil life the pride of Great Britain and the best teachers of her sons. The supreme command will always rest at home, and the home authorities might inspect as much as they pleased; but the monstrosly inefficient "system" by which a body of gentlemen called the War Office—who for the most part know nothing, of course, of war, and are hopelessly involved in peace routine—attempt tasks for which they can have no capacity, would cease. This is my ideal of the main principle which should be called into existence in the place of that total lack of principle, that hand-to-mouth existence, and that hopeless unreadiness for war which now prevail. I am, I trust, no *doctrinaire*, and if matters worked well under the present "system," however indefensible it might appear, I should advise that it be let alone. But, to judge from my correspondence, it seems questionable whether there can be found a single officer of brains who is not absolutely dissatisfied with that present "system," which was described in my last chapter; and at critical times, like the present, this want of faith is a terribly dangerous symptom.

The decentralization which I advocate as especially suitable to British habits, and in harmony with British traditions, must, for the reasons which I have given, begin with what I call separation between the Asiatic and the home armies; such a separation as would be necessarily brought about by different length of service, different systems of retirement after service, different pay, perhaps even diffe-

rent promotion, and certainly very different garrisons. As a matter of detail I think that the Cape of Good Hope should be confided to the care of the Asiatic army, which should hold all the stepping-stones to India except the Mediterranean fortresses. I do not quite see the use of keeping up the small British garrison in North America, nor why Halifax cannot take care of itself as well as Quebec and Montreal are supposed to do. The small garrisons which exist at the West Indian and some other stations should be partly colonial, partly enlisted from home, but not subjected, as are the line battalions now so used, to the present system of perpetual motion. The ideal would be that the men should make the garrisons their homes, nor would such a plan prove in practice difficult, provided that colonial allowances were given to increase their pay and comforts. Such allowances are generally granted, but not on any regular system. It is obvious that the colonies least attractive in climate and general circumstances should be those in which pay and allowances together should be at the maximum, in order to reconcile the men to their dismal fate. Young men of the classes which furnish both officers and soldiers go to the most unhealthy climates for a competence in civil life. What is there in military service to cause a difficulty in such matters? If there is anything it ought to be got rid of as inconsistent with the popularity of voluntary enlistment.

With respect to enlistment, the question is rather complicated. We have, as I have explained, gone through many phases, and the army as it now stands is made

up of men enlisted for various periods, which practically range from three years to more than twenty years. To this I see no objection. If service is to be voluntary let there be as much choice as possible, only let us have done with changes which worry the enlisting classes and prevent would-be recruits from ever being certain what are the actual terms. Curiously enough, the present permission to enlist for only three years, with possible extension hereafter, began with the Guards regiments, which could not obtain sufficient men even by the six years' plan. Since the shorter enlistment was permitted they have had, I believe, no difficulty in keeping their ranks full. Many men if satisfied will prolong their service, whether at home or in India and the colonies. If they are not satisfied they will go, and it is better that they should. An unpopular voluntary army is a contradiction in terms. The point to aim at as an ideal is the nearest possible approach to absolute freedom of choice in the term for which the young man enlists, always provided that he remains long enough in the home army to become an efficient soldier, and then passes to the reserve; while if he joins the long-service foreign army he must remain his full term of ten or twelve years, whichever be thought the better, unless his health breaks down. As Sir Frederick Roberts, among others, has pointed out, it is desirable to have a certain number of old soldiers in the ranks. "While," he said, "I would not advocate retaining many privates over thirty years of age, it would, I am sure, be wise to permit a few—say 15 or even 10 per cent.—to serve their time for pension. I confess I should like to see a

slight leaven of old privates in the ranks, partly because such men are invaluable as examples to young soldiers, and in controlling them at times when it would not be desirable for non-commissioned officers to interfere." It seems necessary to say a few words on the much debated question of the comparative value of old and young soldiers. All the armies of past times were composed, like those of the present, of old and young together. The difference is that whereas in former days the old soldiers formed the bulk of the army, at least in the early part of campaigns, by the modern system the proportions are reversed. All the early fighting in a campaign is now performed by the junior classes of men, with the addition of older soldiers of the reserve. Those who would in former times have been called old soldiers follow up the men who are first used, supply the waste of war, and by degrees take their places more and more in the front line.

Owing to our peculiar circumstances, as our Indian army cannot be composed of young soldiers (for reasons which I have already given), a process goes on with us which is not unlike that which takes place in a Continental army during war. Even in peace time there is in our Indian army a survival of the fittest. It is not a mere question of age, but rather of health and strength. The men of the strongest physique and strongest nerves remain, while the weaker are weeded out even in peace by the action of the climate. Everybody is agreed that the soldier may be either too young or too old for perfect efficiency. Moderate age is best for the many, but, on the other hand, there may remain

a few really old soldiers who by their exceptional vigour have lasted through all the shocks to their constitutions and remain the best types of military manhood, though even they will by degrees become worn out and therefore inefficient. These would form the small proportion of really old soldiers which Sir Frederick Roberts would like to have. The old soldier thus surviving is sure to be strong in body, steady in nerves and in general character, though unfortunately he tends to become an imbibor of strong drink, even when not a drunkard. He will have ingrained into his nature a spirit of discipline to an extent to which it is impossible for the young soldier to attain; in fact, with him discipline will have become an instinct. He is experienced at least in the military habits of peace, and if well trained knows how to take care of himself, and has gained a faculty which may be called that of military intelligence, even though he may not be able to read or write. In action he is not prone to sudden nervous collapse, he is not easily persuaded to run away by the mere report that an enemy is on his flank, and on the whole he has come to understand that the greatest safety for himself lies in perfect obedience to the commands of his officers. Thus he is extremely useful as a teacher and a steadier of others, and generally an example to the raw young soldier.

In contrast with the old soldier the young soldier is full of fire and hot blood. He does not think of danger, and is especially good for any dashing service. He is, however, more easily broken down by the fatigues and toils of war; his nerves are not yet steady, and he is



more liable than older men to be stricken by panic. Yet even here it would be wrong to dogmatize overmuch. The one special example of panic which has forced itself unpleasantly upon the mind of the British nation in late years is the sudden flight of that small detachment of men which General Colley had led to the top of the Majuba Hill. There was at the time an outcry against young soldiers in consequence of this panic, but it so happened that the average age of the men then engaged was distinctly higher than usual, and certainly higher than that of the troops which fought so well up the Nile under Sir Herbert Stewart. One of the battalions, part of which was with General Colley on the Majuba Hill, had lately returned from India after making the march with Sir Frederick Roberts from Cabul to Candahar. The mischief on this occasion really was, no doubt, that the small force was not composed of complete battalions, but of detachments from various bodies.

Though it is impossible to make the young soldier, say of two or three years' service, physically old; though we cannot give him the hardened muscles and the steady nerves which he will have some six or seven years later, we can to a certain extent make him a veteran by giving him perpetual practice in peace of the work which he will have to do in war. No doubt, as I well know by my own unpleasant experiences in the Franco-German war, the actual whistling of bullets, the crashing of shells, and the sight of friends killed and wounded, have an effect which cannot be simulated in peace; but it is certainly possible to give the young soldier such instruction that all the phases of

an action will be familiar to him, and that he will instinctively know the right course to pursue under different circumstances.

So long as fighting was conducted in stiff lines or heavy columns, the regular drill, which still goes on in the barrack-yard, was undoubtedly a very valuable training for war; but the case is altered now, and we are handicapping ourselves if we do not give to the young soldier constant instruction in all those fighting exercises which have taken the place of the starched movements formerly in vogue. If the chief portion of his time is spent in the ordinary drills, whereas on the field of battle those drills will absolutely disappear, we are not training the man for war, but, on the contrary, training him for something so different, that when he finds himself in the presence of an enemy everything will be comparatively new to him. To the effect on the nerves produced by the bullets and the sight of wounds and death, we deliberately add the confusion which arises from his having to perform movements to which he is unaccustomed, or at least little accustomed; and by such training we are deliberately unfitting him to be steady on the field of action. It is said with justice that the best training for the soldier, and that which soonest changes him into a veteran, is the actual practice of war. We should therefore endeavour to make our peace training as like that of war as possible. By this means we shall soonest engraft the qualities of old soldiers upon those of young ones, and shall have done all that in us lies to obtain the steadiness of the veteran in combination with the fire of youth.

Another quality which may be impressed upon the young soldier with great advantage is that strong *esprit de corps* which gives much of their tone to soldiers, old or young. Every British regiment has in its corps, when in good order, something of the spirit and the pride which made the strength of Napoleon's Old Guard. This should be as much as possible encouraged, and I am afraid that the system of making the line battalions at home mere feeders to the battalions abroad has a contrary tendency. On the whole, and taking everything into consideration, it is probable that the best troops would be a mixture of old and young soldiers, with experienced officers and non-commissioned officers, all being trained in peace to do as nearly as possible exactly what they will be required to perform in war.

If the foregoing sketch of the characteristics of old and young soldiers be considered a good likeness, our present Indian service ought to be and probably is the best in the world. It has a larger infusion of the veteran element than any other army. It is not prevented by private considerations from constantly practising during peace the manœuvres and the details of war. It stands in the midst of a native population, and represents the conquering and the holding power of Great Britain. For the highest morality and civilization, perhaps, the tendency to look down upon the natives is not a satisfactory quality, but it is one of those which often lead the soldier to perform heroic deeds.

At home the veteran element is represented chiefly by the army reserves. But, unfortunately, these men are veterans only by the number of years which have passed over their

heads. Doubtless their physique is good and their nerves are strong, but as for that military intelligence which is so much desired by all organizers of armies, it cannot exist, seeing that the army reserves have, of all men supposed to wear the British uniform, the least training. They have not even so much drill as the militia or volunteers; in fact, as a rule they have none. Suppose a man is allowed to leave the active ranks and go into the reserve after three years' service; he will then remain nine years at any rate, and perhaps more, in the reserve, without having necessarily a single call to arms or one day's training. This certainly seems to be a very grave mistake. It may be that the objections made by employers of labour to disturbing their workmen prevent anything like a regular calling out of the reserves for training. If so it is vain to abuse the employers for want of patriotism, and we should cast about for some means by which the difficulty could be overcome. Does not the volunteer organization offer us some means, at least, of meeting the difficulty? It appears to me that the men of the first class reserve might very well be called upon to affiliate themselves to volunteer corps, or, what would be still better if possible, to the militia. In one way or another we must secure the necessary end, that the men who are called a first class reserve, and who must by our system, as by that of every other European Power, be used immediately in case of serious war, should receive training during the reserve period. That training should, in my opinion, comprise as much as possible of manœuvres like those of the volunteers at Easter, and of practice with ammunition.

It will be seen directly that in my ideal army I would make much more use of the militia and volunteers than is made at present; and it seems to me that one of their first duties should be to keep up the military training of the first class reserve. But cannot we go a step further with both the militia and the volunteers? Take the case of the militia. The general idea throughout the services (not shared by any of the higher military organizers) is that the chief use of the militia at present is to furnish recruits for the line. Certainly it does perform that service to a considerable extent, but in doing so it weakens itself. Without any diminution of this particular form of usefulness, the militia might, I think, do something more, and take its place frankly as what may be called the second line in all English wars which require considerable forces. The militia would become a second army of partially trained men with comparatively short service, and not bound to move out of the United Kingdom except in case of a war so serious as to render necessary the calling out of the first class reserve.

Do what we will, short of conscription, the British army will always be small compared with the enormous responsibilities which devolve upon it. If the militia were raised one step higher—if it became a force which might be called out and used, if necessary, abroad in all cases which necessitated the use of the first class reserve—we should have a great increase to our fighting strength, not so much, or at any rate not at first, for work in the front fighting line, as to relieve the regular army from all such duties as garrisoning works and guarding lines of communication. There

appears to me no reason why we should not, in this respect, be placed in as advantageous a position as any Continental Power. I have previously said that the army sent to Abyssinia had very nearly distributed its whole force along its own line of communications, or at any rate would soon have done so. We very much want a force of some kind which shall take this burden away from the fighting army, and so enable the whole of that army to be formed into units for the field—such as army corps, divisions, or brigades. The militia is exactly the force required for the purpose, and should perform the work which devolved upon the German Landwehr during the early part of the Franco-German war. It may be said that the militia were not formed for this purpose, and that many of the men would cease to serve under such conditions; but it is highly probable that if some of them should desire to quit the service a good many others would be attracted to it, and we should have at least as many men, as well as a rather higher idea of what they were fit for. There can be very little doubt that the ranks of the officers would be much more easily filled if the militia were once made to occupy this higher position in the estimation of the country. The notion that the militia is a mere recruiting ground for the army has a very harmful influence, and creates a large part of that difficulty in finding officers which prevails. Curiously enough, we make of the militia not only a recruiting ground for men, but even for officers, who for one reason or another have not been able or willing to comply with the usual conditions for obtaining commissions. A considerable proportion of the junior officers

enter the militia for the purpose of getting out of it again into the regular army as soon as possible. Thus we are always destroying the militia as fast as we create it, and the commanding officers of militia regiments cannot find the process an entirely satisfactory one so far as they are concerned.

The question becomes a little more difficult in the case of the volunteers; but I still think that they, like the militia, might take one step further in the direction of giving valuable service to their country. By the present constitution of the volunteers they are only liable to be called up for service in such a time of crisis as is represented by the immediate danger of invasion. Now considering the high estimation in which the volunteers are held by their countrymen, and remembering the really patriotic spirit and devotion to work of which they have given evidence, it seems to me impossible to believe that they would offer any serious opposition to a measure which should give the Government the right to call them permanently to arms whenever the militia is leaving the country and the first class reserve is called out. It would probably not be necessary to call up the whole of the volunteers, or even a very large proportion of them; and people who object to such measures being taken towards increasing the value of the volunteer organization are in the habit of saying that, when the time of stress and danger arrives, Parliament can make a law for the purpose. This is not practical, for no organization for war can be based on something which Parliament may or may not do under conditions

which are for the present absolutely unknown. If we are to make full use of the spirit and efficiency of the volunteers, it must be known long beforehand what amount of service they are prepared to give and under what conditions. It is certain that no such war as we are contemplating can arise without a great shock to the trade of the country. The difficulties which exist in time of peace, and prevent the volunteers from giving more than a very limited portion of their time, would exist no longer, and it is to be feared that time would become a much less valuable commodity than it is at present.

The patriotism of the volunteers is such that they would for the most part agree to such a proposition if it were made to them. As in the case of the militia, some might go, but others would come; and it is just as well to know exactly how we stand in such an important matter. Other very valuable assistance might be given by the militia and volunteers if it were definitely arranged in time of peace that all the subsidiary services, such as medical, post-office, commissariat, and transport service, and even the work of ammunition columns, should be performed by volunteers from the auxiliary services. Something has been done in this direction. The volunteers have furnished a certain amount of the medical and post-office staff in past small wars, and are likely to supply a larger proportion in the future; but why should not we make full use of this inclination on their part by arranging with them, and even more with the militia, as to what can and cannot be done by them in time of great campaigns? By making such an



arrangement now we should practically add a corresponding amount to the fighting strength of the army, for almost every British soldier serving with the regular forces might then be counted upon as a man at arms always ready to be placed in the front rank. In my ideal army nearly all regular soldiers would be fighters, and the militia would be used for lines of communication, for occupying the ports which any English expedition must hold, and even for sieges; while the volunteers, in their absence, supported by a large force of field artillery, would take entire charge of the defence of Great Britain. From the militia and volunteers together would be drawn all those subsidiary services which are so important and so necessary, and which yet form at present such a terrible drain on the fighting strength of the regular army.

In past times the militia and volunteers have given—and will give, it would seem, in the future also, so far as we can look forward—all the help desired from them, but we have never tried what they will do in actual units under their own officers. In a limited degree the militia have been used under their own officers for garrisoning fortresses in the Mediterranean, but at the very time when we might with a proper organization have obtained the most valuable service from the British militia, during the Crimean War, we left unused the power ready to our hands, and enlisted a number of foreign troops under the name of the “German Legion,” which never was of any use, and which we found it difficult to get rid of when the campaign ended. That is a plan which I sincerely hope will never

be tried again, so long as we have ready to our hands a large number of British troops full of the same loyalty and devotion as the regular army, and, I honestly believe, only waiting to be told how much more useful still they might become. If this plan of raising the responsibility, and therefore the status, of the militia and volunteers were tried, it would be necessary no doubt to provide them with more instructed officers. I have already pointed out in the early part of this chapter what a very serious question the supply of officers is, and how we ought to be always furnished with an excess in the commissioned ranks to be available in case of war. But it would probably be found that the militia at any rate would have no difficulty in obtaining officers, if it were once understood that the force would really be employed in any great campaign which placed the empire in danger.

One of the chief difficulties in finding a sufficient supply of officers consists in the great expenses which devolve upon them when they come out for training. Is it to be understood that all English gentlemen who wear the Queen's uniform and bear the Queen's commission must inevitably consume, either themselves or in the persons of their friends, large quantities of expensive food and of champagne? There are two ways in which a change in this respect might be made. These are, first, a strong order from headquarters vigorously carried out; and, secondly, an expression of public opinion—as distinguished from what is generally called the opinion of “society.” Society is rich and can afford these things; but even society is more or less under the govern-

ance of public opinion, and it ought to be understood that the heavy expenses involved in entertainment by the army, the militia, and the volunteers are serious drawbacks to obtaining the number and the kind of officers required, and are therefore hurtful and even unpatriotic. At present society approves and public opinion lazily acquiesces. Under these circumstances no change will ever be made, only there is not the slightest doubt that the regular army, and, following it, the militia and the volunteers, are rather more luxurious than befits the character of the soldier. We are gradually arriving at a state of things in which none but men of considerable fortune will be able to hold commissions without falling into debt. No doubt this is a great evil, and one which affects the whole question of improving the professional qualifications of officers, and even of obtaining them in sufficient numbers for the auxiliary services.

Another matter which is brought to my notice by some officers, and which has been publicly mentioned by Lord Wolseley, is that of military dress. The curious dominion over human nature which is obtained by fashion forces upon unwilling officers some of the most remarkable costumes which have ever disguised the human form. I am far from supposing that the army would be equally popular, and that recruiting would be as easy as it is now, if military uniforms had nothing alluring to the eye; but every sensible man must admit that there is little that is attractive in the wearing of such tight clothing that a cavalry trooper, for instance, dare not stoop in the street to pick up

his stick if he lets it fall. I know that a great many veterans will say that this fashion looks "smart," and that the appearance of the soldier would be destroyed by a change. Exactly the same arguments were used against the abolition of the pigtail, and, later on, of the extraordinary articles called stocks, which nearly choked the men, and actually caused them to faint on parade almost as a matter of habit. The army which we sent to the Crimea wore these stocks, and some of the old officers continued to wear them during the campaign. But what happened with the bulk of the army was that the tight uniforms and the stocks were discarded; officers and men, finding themselves incapable of performing their duties dressed as they were, began to appear in irregular costumes, and discipline suffered, as it must always suffer when an army finds out that the rules laid down for its guidance will not work in war. Certainly the rabbit-skin jackets worn by officers who had survived the first terrible effects of cold were neither soldierlike nor calculated to attract admiration, but they were practical and comfortable, and nothing that is not comfortable and practical will hold its own in war.

It does not appear to me wise that we should have a style of uniform for the peace dress which is exchanged for a different uniform whenever our soldiers now go upon a campaign. The inhabitants of London cannot forget the metamorphosis of the Guards when they marched through the streets on their way to the Soudan. The same sort of change takes place with all troops sent on active service, and it is a deliberate admission by

the authorities that the dress which is worn during peace, and which is called "smart," is absolutely useless as a military dress for campaigning purposes. This seems unsatisfactory, and unworthy of a practical people. Is it impossible to find a dress which shall be comfortable and yet handsome? Common sense would dictate that for the dress of infantry we should choose something like that which is worn by sportsmen on foot, but with whatever amount of decoration may be required; such decoration to be more or less removable during a campaign. For cavalry it would be supposed that English hunting dress might be good, but here unfortunately the power of fashion has been before us. Thin calves, such as are very seldom possessed by soldiers, are fashionable, and boots are made so tight as to be hardly capable of being drawn on and off, especially when they have been worn, as the soldier must wear them, for a couple of days at a time. We should get perhaps a better type by going to America, where the Mexican or Rocky Mountain costumes are all that is most comfortable, if somewhat dandified and peculiar. The artilleryman, whose duties oblige him to lift weights, to pull ropes, and generally to practise the most violent exercise, should be dressed accordingly, and at least be left with perfect freedom about the shoulders, the chest, and the legs. I am glad to hear that there is a general tendency towards making the dress of the army looser, but it is impossible to pass through the streets of London without being struck by the very remarkable and, may I venture to say, comical appearance presented to the eye by the figures of the Guards in full

uniform, and of the Household cavalry in undress, as they perambulate the streets. If, however, the good-natured caricatures of *Punch*, during a long series of years, have produced so little effect on the costumes of the army, I cannot flatter myself that anything I may say will have the effect which I might desire.

Among the curious and unpractical fashions in equipment of the soldier is this: in the cavalry generally it may be said that the man is possessed of two weapons:—a sword which is most useful when he is mounted, and a carbine which is valuable when he is on foot. Fashion has so ordered it that the sword is attached to his person and remains with him when he is dismounted, at the great risk of tripping him up, whereas the firearm is attached to his horse, so that if parted from that animal, for however short a time, he is incapable of defending himself, because the sword is of little use to him when off his steed. In an ideal army such anomalies as this would certainly be remedied, as this one has been in a portion of the Russian cavalry and in the French spahis of Algeria.

Another very large and pressing question suggests itself to any one who cares to see the British army regulated in conformity with British habits and institutions. Part of the system of stiffness appears to be carried into the daily life of the men. We do not sufficiently shake ourselves free from the traditions of a time when men were impressed, or obtained even by means of gaol delivery. Are we or are we not to aim at bringing into the army a better stamp of man even than the present average private? All sorts of

wonderful proclamations are placarded on the walls pointing out the advantages of the soldier's position in life: there is a certain amount of truth in what they say; but it must be a great shock to a young man of the respectable classes to find himself on enlistment necessarily shut up with a mass of soldiers whose conversation is often highly repugnant to him. Why should not the general freedom which prevails in British institutions be extended under certain restrictions to the army? There have lately been some signs that the views which I here express are making way in the minds of officers generally and of the military authorities. The bonds, not of discipline, because that has little to do with the matter, but of military repression have to a certain extent been relaxed. The soldier is a freer man than he used to be; the scale of punishment has been lightened, and so far as words can go there has been impressed on the body of officers generally the idea that they are to lead rather than drive their men. But we have not yet reached the point where the army can be made attractive to that numerous class of young men who, in the present day, have been well brought up, but see no chances open to them in life. So long as such men enlist in small numbers and are swallowed up in the mass of those whose habits somewhat unfit them for close companionship with educated men, so long must the youth well brought up suffer acutely if he enlists.

One of the points of Continental organization which I think we might possibly make use of is that of offering to educated young men a short service in the ranks, allowing them to

live, if they please, outside the barrack rooms, and at their own expense, as is now done in Russia. After a short period, generally a year or so, they could be released by passing good practical examinations in their military work, and they would then become available as non-commissioned officers or even commissioned officers of the reserves. In all other respects their duties would be the same as those of the men. It appears to me that some such arrangement, but of a more permanent character, would be suitable to English habits and needs. There are constant complaints that it is extremely difficult to find good non-commissioned officers who will remain in the service and make it a profession. Might not this difficulty be got over by enlisting young men of good character and education, allowing them to find their own lodgings, but making them do every duty of the private soldier, and looking to them to rise by degrees from step to step until they filled the army with a body of highly trained and intelligent non-commissioned officers, among whom a fair proportion of commissions would afterwards be given? It must be admitted that poor men find it extremely difficult to support the position of commissioned officers under the present system of extravagance in messes, which I regard as one of the great difficulties that beset the path of the military reformer. The absorption in the ranks of the army of such men as I have mentioned ought to raise its tone and to get rid of that extraordinary fashion of bad language which seems ingrained in the nature of the soldier. So long as the average private cannot speak two words without an oath or a foul expression it will be impos-



sible to bring into the ranks any considerable leaven of better educated men, except by some such system as that which I have described. By degrees, as the difficulty of finding outlets for the fairly educated youth of England becomes more pressing, it may be wise to form even whole battalions or corps of such material. The guiding idea must be that there are multitudes of young men going to the colonies, or to the less civilized states of America, who would be of the greatest value in the army at home and supply the want of that general intelligence which Continental armies gain by the obligation to general service. The German or French regiment is composed of a mixture of all classes and all professions, and very valuable that system of admixture turns out to be. We want something of the same sort in England, certainly for an ideal army, and I have tried to show how we might procure it.

Many of my correspondents cannot understand why I do not advocate for the British army that same general service which now prevails almost universally on the Continent, and brings with it so many good fruits both for the nation and the army. I have, as I have shown, no personal objection to it, but I have pointed out the existence of a fatal obstacle in certain forms of English and Scotch religious and certain forms of English commercial thought. It would be impractical to consider at length a measure which stands no present chance of adoption. The time may come when we shall be drawn into a struggle for life or death, and it seems to me that it will very probably come within the next ten years, and maybe bring with it

the necessity for that general service which would now be impossible of attainment. For our present ideas of the imperial position general service is not necessary, and, moreover, until some capacity is shown for organizing the troops which we already possess I do not see the slightest use in obtaining a large number of fresh men. But, in view of the reign of force which now exists in Europe, and of slowly but surely advancing danger in the East, it is impossible to contemplate an ideal defence of the Empire without supposing that the inhabitants of Great Britain and all her colonies may arrive at a condition in which every strong man shall recognize that he owes to the State some kind of defensive military service. I have tried to make it plain that such service need not be in the regular army: still less need any man with us be taken against his will to fight outside the limits of his own country. But there can be no ideal defence in which the bulk of the population is not trained, however slightly, in the handling of military weapons, and the individual man trained in spirit to believe that the hearths and homes where his sisters or his wife live free from danger owe their immunity from attack, not merely to a half-despised "mercenary army," but to the strength and the skill of his own right arm. Already there are schools in which military training is carried out, and Switzerland here sets us an example which might well be followed by our schools.

There is a general feeling that in case of invasion the population would betake themselves to the hedges or at least defend their houses. But there would be for these men

neither arms nor leaders, and those taking part in war without being enrolled by the Government and furnished with proofs of being soldiers would be liable by the custom of war to be shot if captured. The improvements of modern weapons and the comparative freedom from stiffness of modern armies have destroyed the chances of unorganized resistance. We may search in vain the records of contemporary military history for a single example of a successful stand by peasants against soldiers trained and organized, unless indeed that of the Boers against ourselves can be said to form an exception. My ideal organization—and here again I fear it is only an ideal—would include military training in the schools and colleges, and a general organization, both at home and in each colony, of the whole strength of the country, in what the French call “territorial” forces, Central Europe “the Landsturm,” and other countries “reserves.” To make this a reality we must begin with the well-to-do classes, for, if these are selfish, their influence is on the side of the bad example, and the ideal can never become a reality. If they do not feel the danger and will do nothing to meet it, we cannot expect the poor to do so, whose life is so little attractive and for whom a possible upsetting of existing society has few terrors.

By the various means which I have sketched, there would be vast bodies of men available for military service and more or less trained, in addition to the regular army: the colonies would for the most part provide their own garrisons, which would be to a large extent commanded and trained by spare officers educated at home, though many of

them might be colonists. The militia would be available as a second line or as garrisons for the great fortresses across the sea, thus freeing all the regular troops for active operations; and the volunteers would in the last resort take care of home defence and would be assisted by a sprinkling of regular troops, and especially by trained officers, while behind all would be the possibility for a general levy to be made in case of invasion. This defensive army would require a trained field artillery, which I shall describe in the next chapter; it need not have all its guns horsed in peace, provided that the officers and non-commissioned officers are good, the reserves near at hand, the guns existing and in charge of the batteries, and, above all, provided that the arrangements for obtaining horses are always in working order. India with its long-service army would rest on its own depôts and not be perpetually destroying the home battalions by its calls upon them for drafts. The home army would have a short service of three years, and the men then pass into the reserve for even more than the present full term, because the reserve men, not being allowed to rust but being affiliated to volunteers or militia, might remain useful soldiers for a longer period than at present. The organization for war would be based on the use of the reserve men, as it is in all the Continental armies, and the short service would give us by degrees either a larger force, active army and reserve together, or a force equal to that existing at a less cost. For, as has been already explained, the larger the proportion of reserves to the active army, the cheaper must the organization be for

any given number of men. We might either save much money or greatly increase the fighting strength, or, again, we might save a little and increase our fighting force a little at the same time.

Then as to organization. The general principle should be that of decentralization, which would become quite feasible so soon as the localization of the army in India rendered possible a localization everywhere else. There is a benumbing spirit of scepticism in the country as to the possible existence of such a state of unreadiness as I have described, or rather touched upon, for to describe it is impossible. Country gentlemen can hardly believe that all the apparatus of the Horse Guards and War Office, before which their soldier sons tremble, is unworkable, and groans with friction at every move. Men of business suppose that other men of business, like Mr. Smith or Mr. Goschen, could not serve as responsible Ministers without putting an end to such unbusinesslike proceedings. As for the great bulk of the people, the subject is equally unfamiliar and distasteful to them. But is it not even more wonderful that the navy itself, which every man, woman, and child feels to be "the first defence of the country," without which all is lost, should have lately been, and should still partially be, in such an astonishing condition as Lord Charles Beresford describes? The words which he, then a Lord of the Admiralty, used in an official document, made him distinctly and emphatically assert, with all the power at his command, that the very gravest dangers would fall upon the country if war were declared with any first-rate maritime Power,

"simply for want of organization." "There is a want of system which would be ludicrous if it were not perilous," he declared, and he finished the document in these words: "I am confident that the country, as well as the service, would be simply aghast and filled with justifiable anger if they fully understood the absence of any preparation for war, and the immense loss which would fall on this colossal Empire if war were suddenly declared." The sort of spirit which prevails in naval and military departments may be guessed at, if not fully understood, from Lord Charles Beresford's conversation with an official, when he said that he should like to see "if there were any organization for war." "My friend replied, 'There is not much of that sort, but it could easily be arranged.' I said, 'What? What would you have done in 1885 if you have no organization for war? Had you any?' 'No,' he replied, 'but the military branch would soon have run up one.'" The War Office did "run up" a scheme for the defence of the fortresses in 1885, and a remarkable example it was of the consequence of haste.

Now the words of this gentleman, who is no doubt an admirable permanent official, are exactly what is heard by every man who tries to guard against the pressing dangers which beset the State in these days of the reign of force in Europe. What Lord Charles speaks of took place in the Admiralty, and if these things happened in the green tree what may we expect in the dry? If the British navy has or had no organization for war, and placid officials trusted to "running up" one when, among other difficulties, all the

telegraph wires would probably be cut—if an almost equally placid public opinion suffers such things to exist without indignantly calling for remedy—if to expose such grave dangers and to call for reform is branded “pessimism,” even though the navy itself be here in dispute—is it to be wondered at that a similar want of organization for war exists in military affairs, and that no Minister much cares to assume the task of Sisyphus?

Since these are the results of centralization in the management of the services—since, as is the fact, all attempts to decentralize the administration of the army have hitherto failed on account of the argument that centralization is necessary where the War Office is the only institution which may be said to be free from perpetual motion—I think we may fairly urge that the best thing to be done is to put an end to that perpetual motion which seems to stand in the way of all reform. If we once get rid of the organization for India, by letting the Indian regiments find their own depôts at home, and recruit for themselves, in addition to receiving volunteers for long service from the home short-service organization, there seems no valid reason why the home army should not be as thoroughly localized as is the German army, described in a former chapter. The only real obstacle is Ireland, and if that unfortunate country, from which we draw some of our best soldiers, both commissioned as officers and enlisted as privates, must be indefinitely kept down by the strong arm, we have but to face the one difficulty of sending the necessary regiments there for a time out of their own districts. Let them be

counted as detached, but always return when that service is over to their own home districts, where their head-quarters would remain, and whence the battalions could be administered at least as well as they are from the War Office. No one doubts that localization would be a great aid to mobilization, but it would be much more than that. By the present system officers are kept in swaddling clothes, cribbed, cabined, and confined in every way by a great-grandmother of a War Office whose chief care is to prevent the rising generation from developing its limbs by exercise. Officers are so bound about with rules and regulations, checks and counter checks, that they dare not stir an inch out of the circle of routine. They have no power of initiative, and must, except in rare instances, lose all capacity for it. What is the result? When British troops were in the East our army melted away, because it did not know how to take care of itself, and the War Office, organized as it was for peace, was utterly wanting in knowledge of what to do in war. Neither combatant officers, nor transport, nor medical departments dared to act for themselves, and the War Office found that to "run up" a system for war was not quite such a simple affair as the officials had deemed it to be. Since then the organization of the army has been changed over and over again, but no satisfactory system has been arrived at; nor can it be, in my opinion, till we try with the army the same system which has succeeded in the colonies: untie the coils of red tape and let the creature go free, to learn how to manage its own affairs.

I may perhaps expect to find the usual scepticism as to



the accuracy of these statements. To such readers as care to take a little trouble, I would recommend the study of Major Buxton's book on Military Administration, beginning with the last chapter, which will give the keynote of the whole. They will find there some pregnant passages written by an officer who has made himself master of the question as few are able to do, and who, at the end of his researches, comes to the conclusion that the centralization of the War Office destroys efficiency, is extremely costly, and gives a thousand opportunities for waste, extravagance, and even peculation among contractors. Like many other officers, and like myself, he would localize administration, and for that purpose would begin by separating the home forces from the army in India. There are difficulties to be surmounted, but they are insignificant when compared with the vast simplification which would take place. An opportunity would be given for almost unlimited choice of period of enlistment at home; we should be able to form large reserves; to mould regulars, militia, and volunteers into one harmonious whole, and to localize the forces. Localization would in turn solve the question of employment of reserve men and get rid of all difficulties in mobilization. The forces could then be organized in regular bodies, such as brigades and divisions, which need not all be either of the same dimensions or necessarily modelled on a foreign pattern.

The peculiar position of the British Empire, scattered as it is, and exposed to continual risk of little wars, forces us to keep some body of troops always ready to enter

upon such struggles. It need be only a small force, one army corps at the most, and it should be kept so prepared that any portion could be sent out at the shortest possible notice. This has been the theory, but never the practice, except in the one case of the campaign of 1882, which had been foreseen. The First Corps should have all its equipment, and be as ready for service, with a proper proportion of all arms and auxiliaries, as the British forces in India are now, and this is more than any British force at home has ever yet been in time of peace. Here we have the first efficiency to be secured, though at the same time we must be preparing field artillery for the rest of the army. Then we should build up the Second regular Corps, but with this difference, that it should depend on the First Class Army Reserve for a large proportion of the soldiers who would form its bone and sinew. Preparations are now being made for the sea transport of two corps to be sent one after another, but they will never be able to start until the question of horses is solved, and that solution has not been reached. It is clear that we must never again repeat the fault of breaking up any portion of the First Corps to enable another portion to move; but this fault was only one of many produced by trying to "run up" a system at the last moment, like military jerry builders, instead of creating in time of peace a strong and solid structure in which confidence might be placed.

Having produced two army corps, with the cavalry division complete, we should consider this as the force

which may be used for any purpose, as a perfectly mobile army, either at home or abroad. We should admit the possibility that it might be out of the country at a moment when a Power really dangerous declared war against us, a very probable contingency if the absence of the two corps were to leave us defenceless.

What do we want for a defensive army? Bearing in mind that I here speak of the ideal to be aimed at, and not the means of achieving that ideal, we have to face such a thorough reorganization of the militia and volunteers as will change a huge mass of infantry into a proper proportion of garrison artillery in the right place for the fortresses, of infantry organized by brigades and divisions, and of those subsidiary services which are requisite for the well-being of an army. I say frankly that in my opinion we have more infantry than we need merely for home defence, and one hundred thousand men properly organized and equipped, with a sufficient field artillery, would, in addition to the garrisons of the fortresses, form a vastly better defence than we have at present. I do not propose to reduce the militia and volunteers; on the contrary, I desire to make them more efficient, because I foresee the probability that all the forces we have may, at no very distant date, be required for the safety of the Empire. In an ideal army no troops should find a place but such as are prepared for war. I shall have something to say in the next chapter on details connected with the decentralization and localization of the forces. I am aware that objections are made to the latter process, and hope to produce a

satisfactory reply when discussing what can be done ; but most of these difficulties occur because something or other exists which need not continue to cumber the ground.

To sum up, my ideal of the organization of British military power would be based on the main principle of having two grand divisions, which may be called separate armies or not, as the reader pleases. They would at any rate be separated in time of peace by space, by different terms of recruiting, and by differences of general organization ; for the Asiatic army would have large battalions composed of men enlisted for eight, ten or twelve years, with a proportion of old soldiers. But in some respects the armies would not be distinct, for there would be full facilities for transfer and exchange among officers, and even to a limited extent among non-commissioned officers and men. Aden would, of course, be taken charge of by the Asiatic army, and the Cape so long as British troops paid otherwise than by the colonists must be kept there. In fact this army should garrison all the distant fortresses and coaling stations not placed in colonial charge, but necessary for the protection of the routes to India. The Mediterranean fortresses would, however, remain in charge of the home army. So far as possible local troops should be used for garrisons of coaling stations, and, whatever the troops might be, the garrisons should be always complete. It is a strange neglect to leave garrisons in such a condition that, at the outbreak of war with a naval Power, one of the first necessities would be to hamper our fleet by sending under convoy garrisons to all parts of the world.

The home army, which would also garrison the Mediterranean fortresses, should be recruited chiefly by short service, with leave to extend the time in the ranks given to men of good character at the discretion of the military authorities. Leave would also be given to volunteer for Asiatic service if, after a short time as a soldier at home, any man wished to be transferred. Knowing the aversion of the Briton to anything that bears the name of conscription, I would not advocate general liability to service, but I should like to accustom the population, both at home and in the colonies, to the idea that every man does owe to his country some kind of service in time of war, and that the debt is not completely paid when the tax-gatherer has been satisfied. A reason against adopting general service with us at home is that the voluntary principle furnishes, though at a high monetary cost, fully enough men for all our probable needs, supposing that there is a complete and proper organization; nor can I see what the War Office would do with more men until they have organized for the field, with all needful supplies, the half million who now bear arms.

One army corps should always be ready, and should be inspected every year. The Inspector should have to make a report that it was complete in every particular, or otherwise, and his report should be laid before Parliament, for unless this were done there would always be a liability to have efficiency destroyed by cutting down something at the will of the Treasury. The second army corps should also have its full equipment, though a great part of the men would have to be drawn from the reserve. A satisfactory scheme for providing

horses should also be placed in working order, and this has certainly not been done up to the present time. The militia should become liable to general service in war, and should be organized and equipped accordingly. The volunteers should be liable to be called out for home defence whenever the two army corps were sent out of the United Kingdom. From the militia and volunteers should as far as possible be drawn at their own free will the men for guarding lines of communication, and for the non-combatant work of the army corps, so that every man regularly enlisted might take his place in the combatant ranks. The "reserve forces," as they are now wrongly called, would then be real reserves with definite duties allotted to them, and should be organized accordingly, a good field artillery being supplied to them, but on economical principles which I propose to develop in the next chapter.

With coaling stations and commercial harbours properly supplied with defences and modern guns, the fleet would be free, and I hope ready, to act, though, after some eighteen months' work at the Admiralty by way of building—not "running up"—a system, the arrangements are not yet complete. With one army corps always ready to move and another to follow quickly, a home organization really prepared for defence, the dockyard fortifications supplied with the guns which they have not yet received and the torpedoes which I believe they now have, we should for the first time during many years be in such a state of preparation that the safety of the Empire and its integrity would no longer rest on the forbearance of our neighbours, or on

their dissensions, which might indeed, at any moment, be healed at our expense.

I have now tried to show what should be the principles of construction of an organized system of Imperial defence, which should, with the minimum of change, afford the means of reinforcing India and delivering a counter-stroke elsewhere, without leaving the United Kingdom at the mercy of an invader, even if the fleet were out of the way for a short time. This is what is desired by both parties in the State, and by Parliament. Were it accomplished we should still be unable to take our place as the military equal of the other Great Powers; but I am among the last who would desire to see this maritime empire seeking adventures on the continent of Europe.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PRACTICAL APPROXIMATIONS TO THE IDEAL.

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THERE lately appeared an interesting article in the *Guardian* upon my writings on the British army. The *Guardian* completely supported my military conclusions, but at great length, and with much vehemence of language, attacked both myself and Mr. Stanhope for not putting those facts before the country at the right time. Mr. Stanhope is able to defend himself, and I have already pointed out, in reply to a similar criticism from another quarter, that it is impossible for every Englishman who gives even a large portion of his life to politics to be able to cover the whole field, and to speak with equal confidence, say, for example, upon local government, the condition of the navy, Ireland, and so forth. If, when he takes office, he can manage his own department without losing his interest in the Irish question and in foreign affairs, that is already a good deal. It is not every one who, like a former Whig minister, thinks himself equally competent to perform a surgical operation and to command the Channel fleet. The writer in the *Guardian* holds me largely responsible for the



management of the army during five years. Responsibility for the conduct of offices other than those in which a man serves is responsibility which must necessarily in many cases be unaccompanied by knowledge. Certainly the present writer is not at this moment competent to write for the instruction of his countrymen with regard to naval affairs, upon which subject he has been asked to write by very distinguished naval officers, to whom he has made this reply; yet two or three years ago, although he had formed certain crude opinions upon military affairs, he would have been even less competent to speak upon the condition of the army than he is now with regard to that of the navy. I can only say that I congratulate the writer in the *Guardian*, who is probably himself a soldier, upon having known for a long time those facts with which, by some labour, I have made myself acquainted; but I cannot pretend that I knew them sufficiently well until recently to dare to write about them for the help of others, and I certainly must disclaim any such responsibility as in the writer's opinion may attach to Mr. Stanhope, who, as one who has served in the War Office, is necessarily acquainted with those matters. The writer in the *Guardian* is as strong as I am in condemnation of Mr. Stanhope's recent reduction of the artillery, but for my part I certainly was unaware, even when I began to write, of the extent to which that reduction, as regards war strength, went. I give this as a specimen of the difficulty which a civilian, even when aided by the advice of soldiers, must necessarily find in exactly grasping the bearing of

facts which are not clear to officers themselves. I am delighted to find, both from the article in the *Guardian* of which I have been speaking, and from two later and more favourable ones in the same paper, that my military writings, which were at first scouted as wildly pessimistic, are already considered to be composed of facts which are the "common-places of every messroom, of every professional journal, of every professional discussion." I have my doubts, but the statement gives me hope; for such controversies begin with denial, and pass, through various stages of scepticism, to the final "We knew it all the time." At this stage there is hope that, to use another popular English phrase, "something will be done."

In the last chapter I sketched roughly the main lines by which might be obtained that irreducible minimum of efficiency already laid down by others—namely, the production of two army corps for any purpose external to the United Kingdom, such as the reinforcement of India, or a counter-stroke against an enemy, without leaving these islands or the colonies and coaling stations defenceless. This ideal is very modest, and in view of future possibilities not so satisfactory as I could wish. But it is not, as some of my critics have pretended to suppose, an afterthought; for the first chapter concluded with the statement that there is a "minimum" for which we must be prepared, and that such a minimum had apparently been settled on the assumption that "we ought to defend the coaling stations, to be in a position to defend ourselves in India and at home, and to

send, if need were, two army corps abroad as an expeditionary force. It is upon this basis, which I find, as it were, laid down for us, that I shall try to build." During my examination of the question it has appeared clearly that neither the coaling stations nor the home ports are in a condition to defend themselves. An admirable article, evidently written by a soldier, appeared lately upon this point in *Engineering*. Not only did the writer fully endorse my statements with regard to Gibraltar, which have been confirmed by the result of the recent attempt to fire one of the two 100-ton guns of that fortress at long range; but he himself made still stronger statements with regard to Portsmouth, which he undoubtedly well knows. Even our 38-ton guns, this writer points out, cannot be fired with their proper charges, as the carriages and slides provided for them would not withstand the shock of discharge. This competent writer goes on to say—

"The superb forts which are rapidly being completed in Italy combine a power of offence and defence, any approach to which we look for in vain around our shores—those of the wealthiest nation in the world. We have nothing at our chief ports to compare for an instant with the 120-ton guns and magnificent chilled-iron armour with which the Italian naval headquarters are being protected. The 38-ton guns which are in our forts cannot, as we have seen, even be fired.

"When we look at the plans for the defence of Plymouth recently put forth by a high authority, we see the usual multiplicity of detached emplacements and the crossing fire of numerous small and inefficient weapons which so delights the heart of our engineering department. But the guns used would, for the most part, fail to make the slightest impression against the heaviest armour-clads of some three or four foreign navies. If paper schemes would protect

the country against disaster, we should be secure indeed, but paper forts, like the paper organization of our army, which events have often torn to pieces, will not save us when opposed by a strong assailant. . . . .

"The apologists for the departments will probably fall back on torpedo defence. If other things fail, they will protect us, they say. Surely it is time the torpedo was appreciated at its true merit. The fiasco at Langston Harbour ought to open the most unwilling eyes. . . . .

"As matters stand at present, it cannot be gainsaid that both our chief naval arsenals, Portsmouth and Plymouth, are at the mercy of a well-delivered attack by the existing fleets of foreign Powers. Mine and torpedo defence would be futile, and the guns and forts we have would be overpowered without difficulty. With both these arsenals in ashes, the lesson of providing proper defence would perhaps be brought home to us, but at what cost? . . . . .

"Were we at war to-morrow it would be unquestionably necessary to keep a very considerable portion of our fleet in each of these two ports to prevent their reduction,\* as they are not now strong enough to stand alone; but to do this would render it impossible to blockade effectually the enemy's ports, without which our ocean-borne commerce would immediately fall a prey to hostile cruisers, and even privateers. The action of our fleet would, in fact, be crippled by our neglect of proper defences for our two chief bases of operation."

We now find that the truth of the statements which I have had to make about Gibraltar, Portsmouth and Plymouth is admitted by Mr. Stanhope.

It has also, I think, been proved that the two army corps cannot, by any possibility, be mobilized quickly for want of

\* A friendly critic in the *Broad Arrow* has complained of my quoting, with apparent approval, this phrase. I do not think that the writer in *Engineering* desires to see the unscientific use of a fleet to which he alludes; but, looking to the fact that only two modern guns are mounted at Portsmouth, and to the fact that we have no reserve of big guns from which to supply a deficiency, he thinks it certain that public opinion would force an unscientific use of the fleet upon the Government of the day in the event of war with a maritime Power or Powers.

horses and equipment of various kinds; and that if they were mobilized and sent away, the United Kingdom would be defenceless against invasion for want of field artillery, while India can only be defended if such a force as two army corps at least is available for the double purpose of reinforcing the Anglo-Indian army and delivering a counter-stroke. I understand that lately an attempt has been made to induce Lord Wolseley to take an appointment out of England, and that this has been met by Lord Wolseley's friends with a suggestion that the First Army Corps should be kept at Aldershot ready for instant service, and should be commanded by Lord Wolseley himself. Although I am no admirer of the speeches in which Lord Wolseley seems to laugh at the British public, as, for example, when he assures them that our army is not, after all, so expensive as it might be, inasmuch as the United States spend seventeen millions sterling a year in pensions for an army of only 25,000 men, yet I have great confidence in Lord Wolseley's organizing power, and can only hope that his enemies will be defeated and the command of the First Army Corps conferred upon him.

We have seen how Continental Powers have organized their enormous armies, while our "system," though dealing with but a small force comparatively speaking, is one which, to say the least of it, has outlived its efficiency and needs a thorough reorganization. The principles applicable to this country, as I have tried to show, are not those which are suitable for Continental nations. Supposing that a free hand were given here except in the one point of conscription, the

ideal organization would include heads which we may tabulate as follows :—

1. Coaling stations, fortresses, and commercial ports of high rank to be made secure as rapidly as possible, and garrisons to be completed, with large resort to local levies in the colonies; commercial ports to be commanded by well-trained regular officers.

2. A Foreign-service Army for India and the care of India's communications, except the Mediterranean fortresses. Recruiting to be for eight, ten, or twelve years at least.

3. A Home Army, based upon short service and large reserves. Recruiting to be for three years with the colours, except in the comparatively few cases of men who wish to extend their time whether as non-commissioned officers or not. The reserve men on quitting the colours to be so affiliated to either the militia or volunteers that they shall not forget their military training.

4. The two armies named above to be separate in organization and details of service, but to be united by equally general duties in case of war, and free exchange of individual positions during peace.

5. Frank acceptance of the principle that in any great struggle which may come upon the country we shall have to form and officer levies, and perhaps even officer existing armies of certain minor states in the East. Acceptance therefore of the necessity for keeping up in peace a corps of officers larger than is required for the ordinary peace purposes common to all armies.

6. Formation of an organized and prepared army for the

defence of the United Kingdom, sufficient for its work supposing the two army corps to be abroad. Creation of a considerable field artillery for home defence.

7. The militia to be made available for war purposes anywhere, though only a home force in peace, and the volunteers to be made a force liable to be called out for home service, in whole or in part, so soon as the second corps is ordered abroad. Both the militia and the volunteers to be organized throughout and properly equipped, partly (in the case of the militia) as a real reserve for the regular army in war; partly as garrisons of fortresses; and partly as a field army.

8. The whole scheme to be based as much as possible on the principle of localization and a decentralized administration. Under this head it has been pointed out that considerable savings would, admittedly, occur by localization of the foreign-service army, while short service for the bulk of the home army would either give a saving in money, or an increase in war strength for the same cost, both being economical though from different points of view. The savings obtained by these means should be applied to creating real military efficiency among the so-called reserve forces—the militia and volunteers.

9. The creation of a thoroughly good Staff Department. This staff would deal with home organization, as well as carry out that meagre programme which, to everybody's surprise, has been assigned to the Intelligence Division in the reorganization scheme of the War Office. I am, however, well aware of the practical difficulties surround-

ing this question, and should consider that everything necessary had been secured if we could only hope that the same men would continue to hold office in the Military Department, or that their successors would be of similar ideas and calibre. Among the duties of such a Staff Department should be, I think, the keeping up the drill-books of the army, and its system of tactics, to the most modern standard, and I rejoice to hear that some victories have lately been achieved in this field of labour. The infantry field exercise, which is, I am told, by far the worst in Europe, is to be revised on certain lines lately explained by Lord Wolseley. I only hope that there will not be too much diplomatic compromise, and that the book will be brought into harmony with itself and with the principles which are believed in wherever war is known.

10. Finally, while recognizing that any kind of forced service, whether known as conscription or general liability, is impossible in this country, because of certain modes of thought which prevail, I desire to see established a recognition of the principle that all able-bodied men owe in the last resort some sort of service to their country, and that this duty is not sufficiently fulfilled by the grudging and grumbeling payment of their taxes.

Much is done for Great Britain by the volunteers, and it seems possible that their value will be at last appreciated, and that this cheap form of home defence will be made a real working organization. At present the volunteer force still, I fear, consists of a number of men armed with rifles, but utterly wanting in organization for war. An attempt is



to be made to create a transport service for them, and tentative steps have been taken in that direction. But, whatever be the means employed, they must all learn to shoot at least up to a fair average, and steps must be taken to correct the proportion of the arms, so that artillery may be where it is wanted, and engineers where torpedo defence will be required or works have to be thrown up in war; for instance, London should have an apparently excessive number of engineers. If we are to accept the volunteer principle as the basis of all the forces, may not the existing corps do more than at present, and make it clear to us what they will be prepared to do in case of war? Are there no reserves to the volunteers—men who could be borne on the lists in peace as willing to turn out in case of serious war, and take the places of such as are detained by any public or domestic necessity? It is hardly probable that corps composed of workmen in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich could be spared, and there are many cases where the volunteers are the sole supporters of families or widowed mothers. No nation takes such men by conscription, except when other means have failed and the enemy is at the gate. Many such, however willing, could not turn out, but their places would probably be taken by others who had passed through the force already. These would be the volunteer reserves, and it would seem well for every commanding officer of a volunteer corps to have a list of men who could be called up.

I have already spoken of the desirability of forming in the home regular army organizations on similar principles to

those of the Continental one-year volunteer system, with the same intention as the Prussians had when they invented it, namely, the supply of officers to the reserve forces. We have a plethora of fairly educated young men of the middle classes who would make excellent soldiers if we could but get rid of the tradition that all private soldiers, though by no means all officers, must of necessity be herded together at night like sheep in a pen. Food and clothing to begin with, with prospects as good as those of many city clerks, would attract many such youths to the army, and one of the greatest benefits which the volunteers have conferred on the country has been the proof which they have given that large bodies of armed and disciplined men can exist in our midst without the slightest danger to the liberty of the country or the daily comfort of respectable people. Many of the young men of whom I speak are already idle, and living on the toil of the rest of the population; or we lose them altogether by emigration: with proper encouragement they would come into the army and form a splendid corps, while saving the country a vast sum required for barrack accommodation. They might even possibly help to create that field artillery for home defence, for which I am now about to unfold a plan.

In a book which I find quoted with little less than enthusiasm by artillery officers, I discover amid much that is interesting and important two special requisites which are insisted upon again and again as absolutely necessary for field artillery if it is to be of any use in war. The expression "of any use" is not at all too strong, because Prince

Kraft von Hohenlohe shows how great a part artillery will play in future battles, and what a hopeless task it will be for an inferior artillery to make head against one which is thoroughly efficient. He goes even further, and seems to foresee that, in future wars, a general who finds his army overmatched in the early artillery combat will draw off his whole force rather than continue an engagement in which so great an advantage has already been snatched by the enemy. The two special requisites are—that the field artillery should be able to march both fast and far, for which purpose the officers and drivers must be first-rate horse masters and constantly trained to long and rapid marches,—and that, when the artillery has arrived on the field of action, the shooting should be as good as possible. Without the former qualification the guns cannot be in the front when wanted, especially in the early battles of the campaign; without the latter they will be useless when they arrive.

Here are two very distinct qualifications. To fulfil the first we need a body of men well trained to the care of horses and harness; inured to all the fatigues of grooming, riding, and driving; skilled also in getting the greatest amount of work out of their cattle. Since the days of posting disappeared there has been no such class of men in this country, for drivers of artillery are neither more nor less than military postilions. It is, therefore, evident that such drivers will have to be created artificially. In other words they must be trained regular soldiers. Under no other conditions can I conceive of any body of men being formed capable of undertaking with success such

skilled and laborious duties, entirely different from any which prevail in civil life. At the same time there will be required a body of skilled gunners, and it must be acknowledged that the volunteers have displayed considerable capacity in this direction. Indeed I am not at all sure that the intelligence and education of the force do not place the volunteers in a position more favourable for acquiring skill in gunnery than that occupied by gunners of the regular army. By common report their practice at Shoburness is often extremely good, and the scheme proposed for entrusting to their care guns of position for defensive purposes shows that the authorities have confidence in their power as gunners. It is in accordance with common sense and experience to decide that—while the volunteers cannot become good drivers, because the habit of the care of horses, and that hardness of skin and of limbs which long and fast riding requires, are not acquired in the practice of the civil duties of ordinary citizens—gunnery, and even the care of guns, can be acquired or practised in leisure hours, provided that there is no attempt to trouble the men with much foot or rifle drill.

My plan for forming batteries capable of taking the field for home defence would be to provide the requisite number of field guns, not of obsolete patterns, and to have them always in readiness, completely equipped in every way; to have indeed the full equipment of a battery wherever the unit of a battery is supposed to be present, including ammunition, harness, and so on; to keep up a comparatively small number of horses, with a staff of good

trained drivers belonging to the regular army, but not necessarily living in barracks; and to have volunteers for gunners, and put the whole organization in charge of regular officers supplemented by as many volunteer officers as could be found able to comply with the conditions required for efficiency. Such an organization as I have sketched would, of necessity, be completely localized. The drivers should as far as possible be recruited in the neighbourhood, and when passing into the reserve they would probably find situations as grooms, ostlers, coachmen, or in any employment for which their thorough training in the care of horses would have qualified them; they would consequently be at hand when wanted for mobilization. The extra horses required for bringing the batteries to war strength would be known and registered, and might in many cases receive a small amount of training at whatever time and season their owners could best spare them, a small sum paid for registration being so adjusted as to cover also their use sometimes during peace. The officers would know their reserve men and horses, and would help the drivers to find situations when passing into the reserve. By such means might be formed local batteries very fairly trained and always ready for mobilization. A strong feeling of attachment would probably spring up between the people of the neighbourhood, the regulars, and the volunteers, and the reproach which now falls upon us of having absolutely no field artillery for home defence in case of the absence of the small regular movable army, would disappear. No one can doubt that the organization would be extremely econo-

mical, for we have to remember that the volunteers exist already, only without any sensible or practical organization for war purposes; and even a considerable proportion of the drivers would be reserve men employed on the kind of work which would keep them fit to take up their old duties. Under such conditions it seems probable that the reserve men might occasionally, without annoyance to their employers, spend a few hours in practising those marches which Prince Kraft von Hohenlohe finds so important.

Such mixed batteries as I have here proposed might absorb a fair proportion of the young men who find it so difficult now to obtain suitable employment. Who does not know cases of fairly educated youths who, after hanging for a time on their parents' hands, are finally shipped off to the colonies or the Far West of the United States, where they relinquish all idea of being served, and perform for themselves all the duties of cooks, housemaids, and grooms? Give them the chance of doing the same work at home, under circumstances which will cause them to be respected, and allow them some of that liberty so dear to British youth, and difficulties will be met which at the present time weigh heavily on the minds of parents, sons, and the military authorities alike. The practical way of arranging this matter would be to dispense in such cases with all the apparatus which now encircles the soldier from his enlistment to his leaving the service; to have no allowances, no stoppages, no barracks, nor barrack damages, but simply to give the recruit the sum to start with which will buy him his necessaries, and then so

much weekly pay as may be enough to cover his legitimate expenses as a soldier, including all renewal of his uniform and equipment. Can any one doubt that we should find among such recruits as these the most admirable artillery drivers, cavalry troopers, or mounted infantry that the world has ever produced? A large proportion of them might ultimately become non-commissioned, and a few commissioned, officers. The gates of promotion should be opened to them, and if they could not exactly hope to emulate the deeds or enjoy the reckless life of Athos, Porthos, Aramis, or d'Artagnan, each one of them might flatter himself that with ability, energy, and good fortune, he might attain to the position of a British general. For on the principle of free exchange, which I advocate for the whole service, there would be nothing to prevent a man joining in the most interesting and important campaigns and winning his spurs in battle. Some of these youths would go into the regular active service, others would form a part of a strictly home defence organization, but all should have the power of changing their service at pleasure and at their own expense, provided that their movement inflicted no pecuniary loss, or loss of efficiency, on the country. The chief point is, since we cannot have conscription in any form, to accept frankly and develop industriously the principle of voluntary service so as to meet the various conditions and habits of the country, taking care that we get fish of all kinds into the military net.

I am aware that any proposals of this description will meet

with opposition from the representatives of those men of the past who believe in no warlike efficiency except that of regular troops enlisted for long service, who mocked at the volunteer organization, and saw nothing but danger and weakness in training a large popular force to the use of arms. To such objectors I would reply that during all the many years of trial under past systems, no organized defensive army has been constructed, nor is there a man in England who is satisfied with things as they exist. They might as well cry for the moon as for conscription during peace, and, though that form of enlistment is still legal for militia, no government has dared to put it in force, even at the time when, during the Crimean war, recruits were difficult to obtain, while there were no reserves, and we fell back on the wretched alternative of enlisting the sweepings of the Continent. We have always been hesitating between two opinions, and my proposal is that we should make up our mind, throw away all hankering after conscription, and, trusting frankly to the volunteer principle, build up in our midst an army for defensive purposes, taking care that the conditions are attractive and the organization complete. Military service is attractive in itself, but carries with it, except in the case of the volunteers, too much restriction of liberty, the one enjoyment which our countrymen will not forego, or which, if they are forced to abandon it, they relinquish with pain and irritation. On all sides it is recognized that the volunteers have improved immensely and are improving, but that some of the duties necessary in an organized army are beyond their power.



The daily care of horses is one of them, and without such daily care, and practice in riding and driving, no field artillery can pretend to be efficient. It is nonsense to call an equipment of heavy guns, about as mobile as Pickford's vans, field artillery in the modern sense; and I hold that the issue of such guns to the volunteers is only one of those wretched compromises which no man believes in his heart to be satisfactory in any respect, unless, indeed, he hopes that dust may thereby be thrown in the eyes of his countrymen and money saved. That field artillery is necessary for every army is one of those propositions which are nowhere denied by competent soldiers. I have suggested means for creating it as cheaply as seems possible. It will not be enough for critics to pick holes in any small details of the scheme. If they will not have my plan, let them suggest a better which commends itself to the country, and I shall be ready to support it to the best of my ability. Only let us have no fears of any plan because it is new, or because it shows too much confidence in the people.

The first step to be taken should even now be to save the field batteries which Mr. Stanhope's arrangements have condemned to extinction as fighting units on the mobilization of the two army corps. This can be done easily and cheaply by creating the cadres of the ammunition columns which will be required in war, and arranging for their mobilization by means of reserve men and registered horses. The country should understand clearly that fourteen field batteries are now kept up in peace, with the

whole apparatus of guns, trained gunners, and so on, but are intended in case of mobilization to drop their guns altogether and take up a number of carriages for ammunition, with which to supply fighting batteries and infantry when the army is placed in the field. Thus on mobilization of the two army corps, we should at once reduce our nominal fighting strength of artillery by eighty-four guns which we are supposed to have in peace. Those eighty-four guns would be restored to the fighting strength by creating the cadres of fourteen ammunition columns and arranging for their mobilization in war. The organization would be very cheap, especially if we resorted to the means I have proposed of creating a force which would need little in the way of barracks, stables, and the like. The plan which is now in existence, namely that of keeping up batteries in peace which will not be batteries in war, is on the contrary the least economical scheme which could be imagined, and is precisely that which the War Office might adopt if its clerks were to set themselves the task of providing ammunition columns on the most expensive plan they could possibly devise.

The next step to be taken, if, indeed, it should not be simultaneous with that just named, would be to determine how we actually stand as to troops available for various purposes in the event of a great war. At present we take things very much too easily. If one asks a volunteer officer or a soldier what service he would be prepared to give in time of a great trial, he will say that the point is one for the Government to settle. That means that the Government would have to determine the point at the moment when the ser-

vices of the volunteers were required, not before. But, as I have tried to show, there can be no definite organization for war unless we know long beforehand exactly what troops are available for many needful purposes. The case is the same with regard to the militia, and it is most important to have it settled as soon as possible whether the militia are or are not to be considered liable to be sent out of the country for any reserve purposes if occasion require. With regard to the volunteers it has to be ascertained whether we must wait for an actual threat of invasion before they will be ready to give service at home, or whether we may count upon them to take up the various duties which would have to be relinquished by the regular army if it were sent to deliver the counter-stroke which all strategists consider to be absolutely necessary.

For political reasons no party likes to stir these questions, or to try to get them settled in a definite manner. But it is time that party politics should be put aside on questions relating to the national defence. No doubt some opposition would be raised in Parliament to any scheme whatever that might be devised, but the heads of the two parties might agree upon a definite programme on these questions, after which the criticisms of individuals would have little power for evil. So far as the criticisms were wise they would carry weight, and this is as it should be; but all those who are, like myself, anxious as to the dangers which threaten the British Empire will agree with me in thinking that party strife might be put aside, and that no Opposition should attack, as an organized body, the estimates of

the Government in power provided that they were really based upon the idea of setting the whole national military system in thorough working order. As a matter of fact there is never a party division upon army estimates, even as things stand.

It will probably be found that the great bulk of the militia and volunteers would fall in with a large scheme, but, if not, the places of those who objected would probably be taken by other men who would be attracted rather than repelled by the idea that they were going to be real soldiers, completely relied upon for duty, and therefore of more importance, and more considered by their country, than before.

Supposing the whole of the so-called reserve forces brought into agreement with a system in which the militia would become, if required, a foreign reserve for the regular army, and the volunteers a true home reserve in case of a great war, it would be necessary to organize them in accordance with the new principles. The most important of all points with regard to both the militia and the volunteers is to look thoroughly to the way in which they are officered. I have indicated more than once the difficulties which underlie this question, but it seems to me probable that if we raise the status of the so-called reserve forces, so that they become in the minds of their countrymen equally available for war with the regular troops, though in different positions, a great attraction will be offered to young men to become officers. All students of war agree in one proposition, namely, that the less drilled and disciplined troops are, the more necessary it is that the officers

should be of first-rate quality. The militia and volunteers, if commanded, both in large and in small bodies, by thoroughly trained officers, would make admirable troops, much better than those which Wellington had with him in Portugal until they had become veterans under his hand. In fact this question of officers lies at the root of our whole system existing or in prospect.

There will no doubt be many criticisms of my proposal to have in peace time a large excess of officers, but it will be found that the criticisms are chiefly based on the novelty of the proposal. There has been a prejudice in the country against the officer class, and the objection was really valid so long as the British officer was a comparatively idle and ill-taught person who, dressed in fine clothes, regarded himself as superior to the merchant or professional man; but the time for idleness and incapacity has passed away. Such officers as I have described exist, I hope, no longer, or exist only in small numbers. Military education is not all that it ought to be, but, nevertheless, the officers of the present day are men whose brains have been cultivated, and whose intellectual qualifications are very different from those which were required in time past. The standard of education has been greatly raised, and, with it, the amount of personal work which is required from officers. I would raise the educational standard still higher and increase the amount of work demanded, and take care to give every officer a definite responsibility and definite labours in time of peace. Prince Bismarck, as we know, lately claimed an immense advantage for Germany in respect of the number of qualified

officers which she possessed ; and we shall find as time goes on that the strength of a nation will be estimated rather by this test than by the number of men who exist under the colours in time of peace or even the number of the reserves.

If the modern style of war demands more individual intelligence in the soldier, it removes the necessity of much of that close accuracy in parade drills which cost so much time and labour in the past. Lord Wolseley was able to announce the other day that there are to be sweeping changes in the infantry field exercise, that many of the old, stiff, obsolete manœuvres will be got rid of, and the drill for the soldiers greatly simplified. All this makes it easier to train soldiers in a short time, and little more knowledge than at present exists among the militia and volunteers will make them first-rate troops, provided that they be commanded by thoroughly good officers. I need not return to the question of how these officers are to be produced and trained, as it was discussed by me in the last chapter. My present point is that the provision of a considerable number of officers in excess of the existing strength is one of the first measures that should attract the attention of any reforming minister.

We now come to the question of localization and decentralization. Taking it for granted that the principle of a double organization is accepted, with a long-service army for India and a short-service army for home purposes, it will be evident that the home army should be brought as far as possible into a harmonious organization with the "reserve forces," that is to say the militia and the volunteers.

Short service would provide a large number of first-class reserve men, who would undergo a fair amount of training annually either with the militia or the volunteers: but cannot we set down the regular regiments in the midst of their reserve men, and, by keeping them close to the county militia, bind up the reserve men, and the regular army, and the militia into a solid whole, which would be available for foreign service, and produce a much larger army in case of necessity than we have ever had in the field?

No theory must be ridden to death, and I am perfectly ready to admit that in the present condition of Ireland it would be impossible to recruit purely Irish regiments and leave them in their native districts brigaded with local militia. All will allow that there are no better soldiers than the Irish for active service, and none less liable to mutiny and insubordination in the field; but until Ireland can be pacified there remains the very great difficulty that it has to be garrisoned chiefly by soldiers from other parts of the United Kingdom. We may hope that a time may come when Ireland will be pacified, but, in the meantime, we have to face the fact that true localization must be disturbed by the necessity for keeping some of the regiments in Ireland. This would not, however, matter very much if a regiment had its headquarters and its recruiting centre definitely in a particular district; and if it always returned to that district when not necessarily elsewhere employed, the main requisites of localization would be fulfilled. For instance, supposing that a regiment belongs to one of the ridings of Yorkshire, as matters now stand it seems more likely to

be in any other county in England than in that riding of Yorkshire, and it is also liable to be sent to Ireland. I see no objection to such a regiment being either sent to Ireland in time of peace or sent to the camps of instruction which ought to be created in England and Ireland. The really important point is that it should belong to a particular district, and draw its recruits from that district as far as possible—that the stationing it anywhere else should be considered as a case of temporary detachment, so that it should count upon always returning, when the service was completed, to its own home.

It is sometimes said that we cannot localize regiments in the midst of their recruiting districts, because we obtain the great bulk of the recruits from certain centres of population, and we cannot keep all the troops there ; but, as a matter of fact, we have never tried the principle of local recruiting by a regiment which remains in its locality. For some deep hidden reason the most powerful military authorities have opposed any such system with extraordinary pertinacity. To see the difficulties which have been made one might really suppose that the United Kingdom was in a perpetual condition of simmering revolt against authority and good government, so that counties and districts required to be kept down by alien troops. I need hardly say that such a supposition is absurd, but it has apparently to a large extent acted upon the imagination of certain political circles which always consider the people of England as in a condition resembling that of Alsace-Lorraine. Perhaps no politician would like to admit this idea in Parliament or in any way before the



country, but it really has existed and created one of the greatest difficulties of military reformers : indeed it was one of the stumbling-blocks of Lord Cardwell's scheme. If both political parties would unite to face these questions, and agree to do their best not to quarrel over them, it is probable that this extraordinary chimera would vanish. It is the one real difficulty which stands in the way of localization.

The second, but very minor difficulty, is the unsuitability of the present military districts, which were devised a very long time ago, and have never been adapted to modern needs. I hardly like to go too much into detail because my chief object is to establish certain principles, and my opponents will be only too ready to turn the argument aside to questions of detail if they can. Still something may be said upon this particular point of detail. The country generally takes so little interest in the question that few men now remember how often and how strongly defence commissions and other consultative bodies have recommended that the South of England should not contain, as it does now, the sole centre of our system of military instruction, preparation, and supply for war. The defence commission which recommended in Lord Palmerston's time the creation of fortresses for the defence of the principal dockyards, recommended also that we should not put all our eggs into one basket, but that a second arsenal should be established somewhere in the north ; and over and over again it has been decided that a second camp of exercise similar to that at Aldershot should be provided, probably on the Yorkshire

moors. Not only has this been left undone, but Governments desirous of making petty savings at the expense of the army have actually sold or let portions here and there of the Government land near Aldershot, so that when it was desired to establish artillery ranges near the camp, it was found impossible on account of the proprietary rights exercised by scattered cottagers. I would propose that the scheme so often recommended be carried out, and that what may be called a second military centre be created in the north, so that we should have a second camp of exercise and a second arsenal to fall back upon in case any serious disaster happened to Woolwich. Such a second centre would naturally become the headquarters of the second army corps which is being constructed. I understand that it has been already decided that, if two army corps had to be sent out of the country, the first would embark from certain ports, and the second from the same ports after the first had gone. It is therefore evident that there would be no harm in having the headquarters of the second corps at some distance from the south, and for all other purposes the separation of the two corps and the decentralization which might result therefrom would be blessings. Thus the first army corps should have its headquarters in the south, and better at Aldershot than in London. It would have its camp of exercise at Aldershot, where every regiment ought to spend a portion of each year, and there would be no necessity for the locking-up at Woolwich of an enormous quantity of stores, a system very detrimental to efficiency and rapidity of mobilization. The second army corps would have its

headquarters in the north, and have its camp of exercise—the want of which is very much felt by the reserve troops of the North of England and of Scotland.

Another point of extreme importance is to make sure that all the requirements of an army corps for the field should always be in readiness at the various centres, and that no Government should be able to gain credit for economy by cutting down, without the knowledge of the country, the stores necessary for war purposes. If it be said that Governments must be responsible in the last resort, I perfectly admit it; but I do not admit that any particular party should be allowed to accept the responsibility of bringing the military condition of the country to the state to which it has been brought more than once in modern times without the knowledge of Parliament and the nation. I should propose that both in the north and in the south a general should be appointed who would be bound to report annually on the condition of the first and second corps for mobilization. The reports would naturally be forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State for War, and they should also be printed and laid before Parliament. No Government has a right to allow the country to be unprepared for war, unless with the definite consent of the nation. No policy should be permitted which does not provide for safety and self-protection. It is a very great mistake to suppose that the readiness of the army and the fortresses for war is secured by placing them under a centralized administration in London. It is true that there are military authorities as well as civil in the capital, but

they are far too close to "popular" Chancellors or ex-Chancellors of the Exchequer. If we are to place the safety of the country and the interests of the Empire beyond all danger of so-called "economies" suddenly dictated by supposed party necessities, we must place the responsibility for military organization under definite military heads and not centralize the whole administration at the capital. If the two future divisions of Great Britain were formed and each placed under a separate military head, the two generals might be made absolutely responsible. We should secure that they had inspected within each year every detail of the troops and stores required for war purposes; that their whole scheme of mobilization was in thorough working order, and that all the stores required for the troops under their command were complete.

In view of the revelations which have taken place in Parliament and the press of late years it is impossible to deny that there have been times when not only were the fortresses unprovided with artillery and stores, as indeed they are still, but when the very stores required for troops in the field did not exist, and when it was therefore ridiculous to talk about mobilizing any army at all. If my proposal were carried into execution by general consent of the two political parties in the State—if military officers, chosen for their ability and knowledge of war, were placed in charge of the two military centres, and were bound to report completely and publicly every year—I do not think it would be possible for any Government to cut down the army in matters relating to its vital efficiency; but until

something of that sort is done the same unpatriotic carelessness will certainly occur again and again. The exigencies of party will be allowed to prevail, and the safety of the country will be jeopardized, because Ministers will always comfort themselves with the conviction that they will somehow or other be able to keep the peace in their time.

Under the generals commanding at the two centres would naturally fall the various local commands of brigades and divisions, including the reserve forces, which would then be real reserves. By a proper chain of responsibility each commander would be responsible for the details of all kinds in his own command, and there can be no doubt that, supposing the fourteen field batteries to be saved by creating cadres for ammunition columns, with a small increase of regular field artillery and with the militia made available for war, as I have already suggested, there are plenty of materials existing, without any increase of numbers or special expenses, for the creation of a third corps which might be used in case of emergency, either abroad or at home. By decreasing the time with the colours we should largely increase the first-class reserve, and by even a moderate use of the militia we should find that there are already plenty of troops for a third corps. Whether the organization of this third corps should be taken in hand at once is a question which I have not considered as part of my proposals. I started with the promise to work only up to the old scheme of two thoroughly efficient army corps for a counter-stroke, with a home defensive army besides; but in going over the details of available forces

it certainly appears that a third corps could be formed at very little expense. Whether this be done or not, the militia and volunteers should clearly be organized into brigades and divisions, and brought up to a condition of fitness to take the field not inferior to that of the regular army; but in the case of the volunteers, as they are to remain at home, arrangements could be made to utilize the resources of the country in a manner which would be impossible for troops proceeding abroad. I am glad to believe that efforts are now being made in the direction which I have indicated, and that we are attempting to set the volunteers on their legs as a military force by arrangements for horses and transport of various kinds, settled upon in peace and promised to be provided in case of war. This is entirely as it should be, but I think that there will be no satisfactory organization or arrangements until it is definitely understood that the volunteers may be called out to take charge of the defences of the country whenever the two army corps are ordered abroad, and until the militia are prepared to take the field also out of this country.

Though it might have been supposed that I had given time enough to preparing the field before making proposals, it appears from the remarks of some critics that there is still a widely spread but vague confidence, or at least hope, that invasion is impossible, and that at any rate the difficulty of "getting out again" would deter an enemy from landing even if he could. A very able writer in the *Saturday Review*, though favouring my main contentions, was a little severe on what he considered an over-statement

of the case. In particular he criticized an historical reference to the days of Napoleon and Nelson. I admit that it was just possible to put the interpretation which he did on my words about Trafalgar, and I would not have returned to the subject but for the importance of the main facts in their bearing on our present condition. My meaning was this: Napoleon, in the days when rapid mobilization had not been devised, assembled a large army at Boulogne for the invasion of England, and used the remarkable expression, "If I can but be master of the passage for twelve hours England's life is done." At that time we had in various places a regular white army and militia of some 300,000 men, inclusive of India, and we had at home a volunteer force numbering about 340,000 men. At home there were nearly 130,000 regular troops and 110,000 militia, besides the 340,000 volunteers. Yet Napoleon felt confident of success could he but land.

It is very interesting to recall the fact that we then had what was considered a sure way of destroying the French flotilla—namely by fireships, the precursors of our modern torpedo boats. The "catamarans" were tried under favourable circumstances, with a total damage to the enemy of twenty-five men killed and wounded. Napoleon's army was about 150,000 strong, and was to embark at various places, the largest camp being at Boulogne. Nelson's fleet was decoyed away to the West Indies, and Villeneuve returned before him in sufficient time to have done all that Napoleon wished, had he not been afraid of responsibility and especially of Nelson's talents. When at last he started, he met

Sir Robert Calder sixty leagues west of Cape Finisterre, and there occurred an indecisive engagement, both sides threatening to attack next morning, but declining the contest by mutual consent. The writer in the *Saturday Review* seems to forget that Sir Robert Calder was tried by court-martial for this business, and found guilty of an error of judgment. The French officers complained equally of Villeneuve, who seems, however, to have believed that Nelson was already between him and the Channel. Calder had been obliged to raise the blockades of Rochefort and Ferrol, and there was nothing to hinder the French there from coming out. Villeneuve could have joined these squadrons and broken the blockade of Brest, and then, by engaging the Channel fleet, have given Napoleon the freedom he desired. He feared to meet Nelson, though that great admiral was then far behind. Instead of obeying the Emperor, Villeneuve sailed for Cadiz, and Napoleon, seeing that the favourable combination brought about by his ability had failed through Villeneuve's weakness, exclaimed, "What a navy! What a sacrifice for nothing! What an admiral! All hope is gone. Sit down and write." The instructions for the famous march to Ulm were written, but it has always been held that except for the battle of Trafalgar, which occurred about the time that Mack was forced to capitulate, Napoleon would have tried another plan for the invasion of England. Great as our superiority was then at sea, the escape was undoubtedly a narrow one.

In these days invasion would be a much less difficult operation than in the time of Napoleon or at any previous



epoch. To begin with, it would not be necessary to assemble a large flotilla at any one spot for the transport of the troops, because steam ships are not at the mercy of the winds and tides. Portions of an army embarked at Havre or Cherbourg or Brest, for instance, would be as certain to arrive at the right spot at the hour indicated as if they were steaming across the Channel from Calais to Dover. The result is that an army can move by sea with at least as much accuracy in calculation of time and space as if it were marching on land, while its rapidity of motion may be considered fully ten times as great. If the distance to be traversed is very long the proportional advantage of sea transport increases. Therefore a fleet, whether of transports or ships of war, or both, can scatter to places hundreds of miles apart, and concentrate with almost absolute certainty at a given time. When once arrived, it might disembark troops and land them with great rapidity by using steam launches to tow the boats, both launches and boats being easily carried by the large steamers of these days. Or it might make a demonstration at one spot, and after all measures had been taken by the defenders to meet an attack in that direction, pick up the boats, and, moving away under cover of night, appear at another place, perhaps a hundred miles distant, the next morning.

We all know what happened in 1882. One day troops were landed at Alexandria with the apparent intention of being followed by the whole expedition. The next morning the Suez Canal was in the hands of the invaders, and the force had already seized Ismailia. To gain a footing

on an enemy's coast and disembark a substantial body of troops there is now one of the easiest operations in war, provided that the defenders have not a superior naval force capable of crushing the invader's fleet which would cover the operation. Or the invader may sail with his fleet of ships of war to meet the defender's fleet, and while a battle is taking place, which, successful or not, must cripple the defenders, the transports with the invading army may concentrate at some point a hundred miles distant and make the descent. All this facility for concentration and disembarkation was wanting in the days when Napoleon proposed to invade England, and still more was it wanting in those earlier days when so many successful descents were made by various fleets on various coasts. The great majority of the attempts which have been made to land forces on enemies' coasts during historical times have been successful, and the odds are much more in favour of the invader than they used to be, because movement by sea is now independent of wind and tide.

I am not here asserting that Great Britain is to be invaded and conquered even if we were at war with a great maritime Power or combination of Powers. I trust that before such an occurrence is likely to take place we shall have put our house in order. But I do assert most emphatically that if any such war comes upon us while the great dockyards and commercial ports are unready to defend themselves, and while the land forces in the United Kingdom are unprepared for mobilization and for sustaining a campaign, the nation will be in such a state of anxiety that any show of

preparation to invade made by an enemy will surely oblige the Government of the day to concentrate the bulk of our naval strength for home defence. Then will arise danger lest the great trade lines so necessary for food supply should be insufficiently guarded, and the colonies and coaling stations be left to their own defensive resources. In such a case what becomes of the theory that Gibraltar, Malta, and a host of other places may rely on the assistance of the fleet? and what possibility is there that we could deliver a counter-stroke, without the means for which we should be but a couple of islands in the Atlantic Ocean, instead of what we fondly estimate ourselves, an Imperial nation wielding a world-wide power? If this be pessimism, all the soldiers of the present day who have made a serious study of the question are pessimists, including Lord Wolseley and Sir Frederick Roberts. To show the opinion held by the best-informed and most responsible soldiers upon this point, I will quote a reply made by the head of the Intelligence Department before Lord Randolph Churchill's Committee on the Army and Navy Estimates:—"I consider that the broad principle in the first instance cannot be denied, that no nation which stands purely and solely on the defensive, and is unable to strike a counter-blow, can ever be considered in a secure state of defence."

As regards invasion, a curious and typical instance of a mind opened by a little study of the question was afforded lately in the case of another officer. Colonel Sir Charles Nugent was for a considerable number of years one of the senior officers in the department of the Inspector-General of

Fortifications, where he had to deal with the fortresses at home and abroad. He at that time more than once lectured on questions relating to our defences. Quite lately the Council of the Royal United Service Institution asked him to read a paper on the "Means available, or which may be made available at a few weeks' notice, for securing our Coast Line generally against sudden attack." The lecture was delivered accordingly, and what did this officer, experienced in all the ways of fortification, and familiar with our defences, existing or prospective, declare?—"In the few weeks which have elapsed since the Council's invitation I have turned it over in my mind anxiously, again and again, most anxiously, and the more I turn it over the less I like it. If I am compelled to answer directly the question what measures are to be taken in a short time to place our Coast Line generally in a state of security, I must in honesty reply, 'It cannot be placed in security in a short time.'"

In the body of the paper Sir Charles Nugent pointed to the same weaknesses which have been spoken of by me, and used much stronger language than I have done with respect to the "infatuation and imbecility of successive Governments," and so forth; the fact being apparently that he himself had never quite understood the necessities of the case till, like myself, in a time of comparative leisure, he began to study the question as a whole in the light which has lately been brought to bear upon it. Yet Sir Charles Nugent had been assistant to the Inspector-General of Fortifications for a long period. What he calls

the "imbecility" of Governments arises simply from the fact that Governments have to deal with questions of the day, and it is only lately that this particular question has been so brought before the nation as to force public attention to concentrate itself upon our military necessities.

Since Sir Charles Nugent read his paper at the United Service Institution we have had Mr. Stanhope's memorandum, and the expurgated edition of the report of a committee assembled to examine the condition of our fortresses and general defences at home and abroad. Here then are documents published with all the authority of the Secretary of State for War, whose statements are fortified by the opinions of the best experts in the army. If there had been in my writings any material errors or exaggerations, they would certainly have been pilloried by the Committee and the Secretary of State in their documents, or by Mr. Smith and others in their speeches in Parliament, in reply to Sir Walter Barttelot and those members who had largely quoted from me. But what do we find? Not contradictions or even modifications, but support and amplification of every word that I have said. The critics who have called me a pessimist must now try to find a still stronger word for the Secretary of State for War, the Commander-in-Chief, the Adjutant-General of the Forces, the Inspector-General of Fortifications, and a host of other authorities, who, while differing slightly as to the remedies to be applied, and not concealing their belief that much more ought to be done, concur as to our grave danger, and in recommending that a

sum of three millions should be spent on the most absolutely necessary measures of precaution.

Taking the fortifications first, how mild are my criticisms beside the remarkable utterances of the Committee! "The witnesses have been unanimous in pointing out the weakness of our present position and in urging the imperative necessity of strengthening and adding to the existing defences." The Committee have eliminated "those contingencies which appear to them sufficiently improbable to make it unnecessary to take them immediately into account." There are then possible elements of danger which the Committee, presided over by Mr. Stanhope, have agreed to ignore, lest their demands should seem even more pressing than they are. But enough is told to indicate how we stand. The defence of the maritime fortresses—and all our fortresses are maritime—must be both active by torpedo and gun-boats, and passive by forts and guns. There has been as yet no active defence at all provided, and we are told something, though admittedly not all, of the want of passive defences. I have said that the defences of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Malta, Gibraltar, and other ports are incomplete, and therefore a source of material danger. The Committee tell us: "It is not too much to say that the destruction of our great dockyard at Portsmouth—and in a less degree that of Plymouth—might be decisive of the issue of a great war; while the defence of the Thames and the Medway is likewise of paramount importance, not only because in these rivers are situated the yards of Chatham, Sheerness, and Woolwich, but also because it is almost universally believed that an

enemy descending in force upon England would immediately endeavour to strike a blow at London." "After enquiring carefully into the condition of each of these ports, the Committee have no hesitation in stating their conviction that deficiencies exist in the defences of each of them which render our position dangerously insecure." With respect to Malta and Gibraltar, "Both require very considerable additions and alterations of armament." At Portsmouth an enemy's "ironclads, carrying guns of a range of 7,000 yards and upwards, might be able, in spite of the fire of the guns now mounted in the sea forts, to gain a position from which they could effectively shell the dockyard." The ironclad forts are not, but should be, armed with heavy guns and made in all respects secure. "The armament of all the forts on this side (the eastern) requires considerable improvement. It is also necessary to erect a new land battery." When these details have been attended to—and the Committee recommend that the improvements be carried out with the least possible delay—when also the mine-fields required here and at the western entrance are prepared and protected by machine and quick-firing guns, "they believe that the imminent risk to which the dockyard at Portsmouth is at present subjected will be mainly averted." So then a report, signed by the Secretary of State for War among others, tells the country that the dockyard at Portsmouth has been and is in imminent risk, and that even after the suggested improvements that risk will only be "mainly" averted, while the same dockyard is of such vital importance that its destruction might be decisive of the issue of a great war.

Plymouth also is "in pressing need of additional defence;" and of the Thames and Medway defences it is said that when certain works and armaments which are recommended "have been completed and the mine-fields are protected by the necessary quick-firing guns, the passage of the Thames will be practically secure against an enemy's fleet," always provided that torpedo boats be prepared for the necessary active defence. Harwich requires a mine-field with its light armament for protection; an active flotilla and "some more powerful guns are urgently required to resist the passage of an ironclad." Dover remains without its strategical harbour of refuge which has been so often recommended, and is "fairly defended" till the new harbour is undertaken, which seems to mean that, though it has only two modern guns in the whole fortress, Dover may be allowed to take its chance for the present as being of little comparative importance so long as the great dockyards remain "in a state of imminent risk," which may decide the issue of a great war. Halifax has works which are "out of date and contain no guns capable of opposing modern armaments." As for the mercantile ports, "Beyond a small expenditure for surveys on the Tyne, and for submarine mining works at almost all the ports, no commencement has yet been made in these works of defence."

This straightforward report is quite sufficient for my purpose without going into any further details with respect to fortifications. I had been challenged to give proof of my general statements concerning the unready condition of our great fortresses. I followed general statements by



some of a more detailed character, yet hesitated to say all that I heard. The clearest and most cogent proof that it is possible to imagine has now been published, for the whole world to read, by Mr. Stanhope, and in so publishing it he has, in my opinion, done well, looking to the difficulty of secrecy of preparation in a parliamentary country. Adopting then his Committee's report as to the points which most require attention, the question is, what should be done? The intention appears to be to begin with the mine-fields and light armaments, and these have been already put in progress, to be paid for out of annual estimates. So far, so good, and the project of completing the fortifications and heavy armaments is also satisfactory. But why spread the work over three years as is proposed? We have to recollect that the total of the three millions estimated does not represent the whole amount required to put the fortresses, coaling stations, and ports in an ideal state of defence, but only the sum needed to do the very least that is urgently necessary in order to reduce to a minimum the risk of a total collapse deciding the issue of a great war. There is, then, not an hour to be lost in providing, not only the mine-fields, but the works and armaments suggested by the Committee. It will be said, no doubt, that guns cannot be made in a hurry, and that works are of no use without guns. I daresay that the pace of supply could be quickened if once the Government would make up its mind to give the order and require that the execution should be pushed on. It used to be considered that ironclads must necessarily stand on the stocks for many years, subjected to all sorts of

change and development. That idea has been exploded, and it has been found both cheaper and better to build them rapidly and then set up others embodying the latest developments. It may be the same with the guns. True, there are always minor details under consideration, and it may well be that guns manufactured now may lack improvements which may be designed in the future. But while waiting for these or considering how this and that may be perfected, or especially how the country would stand a large demand at once, time is slipping by, and, as I have previously shown, the unreadiness of England is a danger to the peace of the world.

The one thing needful is that the construction of the new ordnance shall be strong enough, and nothing can be more fatal than our joining in that race for providing the greatest effect with the lightest guns, which has led to so many dangerous weaknesses in our system, as well as in those of foreign Powers. When one sees the interior of an ironclad or covered fort one is struck by the certainty that nothing an enemy could do would be so dangerous physically and morally as would be the bursting of a big gun in such a confined space. I know very well that all sorts of schemes are being tried for economizing the life of a gun, but I fear that none of them has been very successful, and the economy is as far off as ever. Meanwhile economy is not the chief question just now, but urgency. Guns are wanted which will hold ironclads at bay, and thus relieve the British fleet from keeping constant guard over fortresses that are unable to protect themselves and

the precious dockyards they profess to cover. Whether those guns last a period shorter or longer by a few rounds before being repaired is not the main question, though an interesting one. The points to strive for now are to have modern guns of one sort or another which will enable the defence of a fortress to last a few days longer in case of attack, and to have all ordnance so much above the work it will be called upon to do that bursting is impossible. There are now establishments for gun-making at Woolwich, Elswick, Manchester, and Sheffield, if nowhere else in the United Kingdom, and what has become of our boasted manufacturing power if, by division of labour, we cannot turn out heavy guns in less than three years—years likely to be big with the fate of empires? In my opinion we should build the necessary works at once and arm them as fast as possible, putting in one gun after another as soon as they can be made. The great ironclads which used to take from seven to ten years, I believe, to build, or at all events seven, are now being turned out in less than three. Is it conceivable that all the manufacturing energy of this country cannot devise means of constructing ordnance more quickly than enormous ships with all their paraphernalia of armour plates, rams, turrets and elaborate steam engines?

There are indeed those who deny all need for forts. A London newspaper lately had a notice of my March article, in which the writer said of the coaling stations, "Our fleet must continue to protect such as are necessary; the others had better be left to take care of themselves." This is a delight-

fully unscientific view of the usefulness of coaling stations and of the duties of a fleet, and there is only this to say of it, that it is opposed to the opinion of almost every one of authority who has given attention to the subject, and opposed to the conclusions of Governments representing both parties in the State. At the same time it is right to admit that there are some British sailors who believe that the navy, if greatly strengthened, might perform the whole of the duties of Imperial defence, and might be able with such certainty to blockade the enemies' fleets in the enemies' ports as to make the protection of coaling stations by fortresses unnecessary. I fear, however, that the writer in question, if told that we must spend additional millions on our fleet, would answer that it was a matter of indifference whether the millions were to be spent upon the fleet or upon defensive organization of our armies, and upon guns and fortresses; that his desire was that the money should not be spent at all.

The school of naval officers of which I speak maintain that the defence line of the British Empire is to be found on the coasts of our adversaries, with merely a reserve fleet in the British Channel; that this was our policy of the past, and that it was so far successful that on only one occasion in the last two great wars did a Franco-Spanish fleet enter the Channel; that if the fleet is strong enough to hold this line of defence the whole Empire is safe in its keeping; that if it is not strong enough, and has to be drawn back to defend the heart of the Empire, that is the United Kingdom and the capital, the fortification of the coaling stations will not prevent us from signing a disastrous peace, because our

food supplies will be stopped through the destruction of our commerce ; that if we lose the command of the seas no army that we are likely to organize can prevent a landing, but that this landing will be unnecessary, for if we once lose the command of the seas we shall soon be starved into submission. The feeling of the sailors of whom I speak has been raised to a point of exasperation by the reduction of the Naval Estimates in the present year, and many sailors, who think that they see that the navy is to be starved, are inclined to grumble at the expenditure of three millions on fortifications as a waste of money. Laymen can only be guided in their decision by considering, with the best ability they can bring to bear, the opinions of scientific writers both military and naval, taking care to verify the possibly partial statements given by English writers by comparison with those of the best scientific authorities of the Continent. It is clear by a comparison of these authorities that it would be unwise in us to make a new departure or to lay down any principle except that by which I have been guided, that our army should discharge the duties of an army and our fleet the duties of a fleet. Moreover, the naval argument of which I speak disregards the possibilities of attack upon coaling stations by fast cruisers, such as we know, from the best sources, both the French and the Russians contemplate in the event of war with us. Whether local naval defences should not in every case be added to defence by fortification is another matter. I am inclined to agree with the naval school that we should view with jealousy a decrease of the Naval Estimates in the present

state of Europe, and that the old ironclads, which are no longer fitted for a place in our first line of defence, might usefully be employed in guarding coaling stations, inasmuch as the light cruisers of the enemy would be unable to harm even the older ironclads if armed with heavy guns and acting in their own waters on the defensive.

Seeing that the question of our necessities in fortifications has been so well taken up by Mr. Stanhope's Committee, the wisest plan is to accept their conclusions as to what needs doing, and join our voices in urging upon the Government not to be overborne by the pressure of any man or men, but to set themselves at once to carry out the recommendations of the Committee with the greatest possible speed. It has fallen to their lot to live in a time of international danger, and however far the negligence of past years may be condoned because there was then no belief in the probability of war, that excuse can apply no longer, since the whole nation has opened its eyes to possibilities unrecognized for many years past, except, indeed, at the moment of the Penjdeh incident. It is clear that the military advisers of the Government are extremely uneasy, and the time is one for bold decisions and strong measures, not for temporizing and hesitation.

With respect to what has been said in this and the preceding chapter as to the state of the army, Mr. Stanhope's memorandum on the Estimates confirms everything that I have written. The first army corps is ready except in some minor particulars, while the second army corps is far from being fit to take the field, and Mr. Stanhope hesitates to sanc-

tion the necessary expenditure. The sum would, I believe, be considerably under £300,000, an expenditure once for all, and I am of opinion that it ought to be incurred. Until that is done the new scheme of mobilization is just as abortive as its predecessor, and for exactly the same reason. A Government call on their military advisers to devise a scheme. They do so, and state clearly the amount required; whereupon the Government reply, "No. We will continue the usual expenditure of many millions on the forces, because that is all according to precedent and will not be questioned; but we refuse the few thousands to make the whole effective because it would be a new item and lead to questions in the House of Commons." Yet, until those thousands are spent and the second army corps is prepared for mobilization, the method of levelling down now tried by the military authorities is exactly as abortive as the old one of levelling up, only as it is more modest in its demands, the failure is not quite so remarkable a spectacle. I am somewhat pained to hear of recent conversations in which certain prominent English politicians (and even one who has personal connection both with the army and the navy of such a kind that I should have thought that he would have known better) have said that they thought it sufficient that we should be able to send away for a counter-stroke not two but one army corps. We have come down already from our eight army corps to two, and when we have further come down to one, there will certainly arise a school who will say, "One can be of no use; let us do with none at all." They would have this upon their side, that, while two army corps consti-

tute a force which would be of some value when operating from a naval base with an alliance, a single army corps would excite the derision of our enemies, and would probably figure only as an accessory to their triumph. As, moreover, the two army corps are used over and over again in our computations—used, for example, against Russia upon the North Pacific, upon the frontier of Asia Minor, and, according to our Indian authorities, as a reinforcement for India and upon the Helmund—we must remember that, however difficult it may be for two army corps to find themselves in three places at once, it is even more unlikely that one army corps should suffice for all these needs.

It is not possible to refrain from the inquiry whether the working of the new organization, which professes to put more power in the hands of the soldiers, is to be judged from its first fruits. Many people ask me if it would not be enough to establish a Great General Staff on the Continental model and let it alone to deal with the Government and get its requirements granted. No one is more desirous than I am to have such a General Staff Department on an English model, and indeed something of the kind has now been established, for the Adjutant-General appears to be recognized as something very like a Chief of the Staff under another name, and with extra duties which he would do well to shake off if he could. Yet nothing is clearer than that Lord Wolseley and the able men by whom he is surrounded have been working hard to make their ideas of effective mobilization prevail, and cannot succeed. Unless the voice of the country is heard on this question, we shall



perhaps live to see another Secretary of State speaking contemptuously of the "abortive" levelling down scheme flourished before Parliament by the two Ministers, Mr. W. H. Smith and Mr. Stanhope. At any rate the principle of having two army corps ready for service at home or abroad has by no means been fulfilled. The present Government seem to be moving in the right direction under good advice except in some particulars, and it only needs a little more courage on their part to set at any rate the two army corps on a proper footing. I entirely agree with them in the line they seem to be taking to make the volunteers self-supporting and able to produce their own transport. The men should also have great-coats and whatever else is necessary for troops in the field. But the Government should go a step further and agree with the volunteers that they are to be available in pressing cases not necessarily involving invasion; in short, that they should take up the defence of the country when required, for otherwise the best and most honourable use is not being made of them. For my part I have complete confidence in their devotion to duty and in their patriotism, and I am not one of those who regard their agitation for a large capitation grant as springing from anything but a desire for complete efficiency. I would give them whatever is required to keep the corps in good order, and I would confidently appeal to them to give in return the engagements necessary to enable the country to reap the full benefit of their services. Colonel Edis, who has twice publicly criticized my remarks, fairly puzzles me by his dislike for any reference to the capita-

tion grant, which is not given nor used for personal enjoyment, but for the public benefit of the corps. No one that I know has ever suggested any other motive for the claim of an additional grant than that which actuates the regular army when it asks for improvements in artillery or an increase of practice-ammunition. All I wish is that the force which now earns and deserves a very substantial annual sum of money should take the splendid position of guardians to the mother country when the regular army, and perhaps part of the militia, are absent. For the militia also must rise a step, as I have suggested already, and in so doing increase its popularity and the honour in which it is held by giving general service in time of war.

I remark that Colonel Nugent agrees with me in desiring that the education and training both of officers and men should be more practical than they are now, for he too has his dream in which he sees a time when among other good things "merit ruled promotion, when education and examination were less priggish and more practical, when education was considered as a means, not an end," and I would add, when military exercises were simplified to a point within the competence of all men to master without difficulty, and when a tactical instinct was cultivated, as that of discipline and common drill is now. I have received from private soldiers, and from others who have served as privates in their time, their view of drill and discipline, which is not without its interest. One of these informants points out that, while he agrees with officers and military writers in thinking discipline an excellent thing, which, moreover, cannot be done without,

he finds a good deal of nonsense covered by the name. He gives as an example, that if soldiers are at dinner and an officer comes into the room each soldier must stand at attention until the officer is pleased to say "Go on," or "Sit down;" that standing at attention means that the soldier must not move any part of his body, that he must cease to eat, and that if he has a mouthful of hot potato he must keep it in his mouth until he is by word of command allowed again to move his under jaw. This he thinks unnecessary for the sake of discipline. Again, he says that soldiers with one or two stripes are not supposed to be seen in the company of privates outside the barracks, yet these non-commissioned officers sleep in the same room, dine at the same table, spin yarns in the evening with these privates, with whom they are not to be seen outside the barracks, while the youngest subaltern may be seen at any time in the company of the colonel; and this he gives as another type of what he calls nonsense rather than discipline. Again, he points out that soldiers who have the care of horses are three parts of the day up to their ears in dirt, but that when they go out they must be gloved, and that the compulsory wearing of gloves by mounted men is the cause of many military offences; cases are adduced by him where men have been punished because the military police have brought them in for being improperly dressed, the only impropriety consisting in a mounted man having taken off one glove. These are described as "pettifogging practices," nagging to the men, and as obnoxious to good as to bad soldiers, although classed under the head of discipline. My inform-

ants point out that the private gets his "discipline" "in lumps;" that when an officer comes back from leave he is apt to think that everybody has become careless, because these matters of pure form have been insufficiently attended to. It is quite clear from the communications that have reached me that the men feel it a grievance that officers should be allowed to wear plain clothes at all times, while the privates are bullied in mere trifles concerning dress when off duty. The privates say that they cannot see why the officers should be ashamed to wear her Majesty's uniform, or why privates should be compelled to salute officers in plain clothes. One of my informants says that the privates are informed that the salute is to the uniform, and that it is the Queen's uniform that is saluted when an officer is saluted, but that in contradiction to this view men are punished for not saluting officers in costumes of a very different kind. This correspondent, who is hard upon what he calls the "antiquated tricks" of "the army fossils," declares that he thinks that the Articles of War must have been "made for vagabonds, and not for soldiers of the second half of the nineteenth century, who can read and write, and are indeed as well educated for their station in the army as the officer is for his."

Whatever be our drill and discipline system—and I really do not see why we must necessarily follow the Germans at every point—we should, I hold, take measures for introducing military exercises as part of the ordinary curriculum at schools. It ought not to be possible for boys to be round-shouldered or devoid of that correlation of forces necessary

for making eyes, arms, and legs work together in harmony. However much Continental nations may lose by general service, they at least gain physical training for the greater part of the population, and that is no bad equipment for the competition of life.

It will be seen, after all that has been said, that the measures I have at different times recommended have to a certain extent forced themselves on the attention of the present Government, but will not be carried into practical efficiency unless the country keeps up a steady pressure on the Cabinet. The lack of field artillery still disfigures every scheme and creates an absurd disproportion of the arms. I have tried to suggest a remedy which takes full advantage of that force upon which all defence of the country should be based, namely, the spirit which has produced the volunteers and would double their numbers in case of danger. In face of all that has been said without contradiction on the subject, Mr. Stanhope cannot surely now pretend that his position guns fulfil the qualifications necessary for field service and so well explained in Prince Kraft von Hohenlohe's book. My proposal is a new departure, but that is what is required. We must needs do something more than adhere to the old lines when all the world has gone so far in advance of us.

The want of garrison artillery, which Mr. Stanhope admits, is to be remedied, as I proposed, by changing the proportions of the arms in the volunteers. For instance, Portsmouth is in special want of artillery volunteers, and something more than "encouragement" is needed to correct the disproportion.

tion ; otherwise the sensible rule announced by Mr. Stanhope's memorandum, that the gunners who would have to man the works in war should be familiar with them in peace, cannot possibly be put in practice. It should be plainly and publicly announced that a certain number of artillery corps are absolutely required, in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth, for example ; those corps would soon be constituted, and should be made familiar with the works and guns allotted to them ; not spending their time in infantry drills and marching past, but putting their whole spare energies into their work as gunners—quite work enough for regular soldiers, to say nothing of volunteers. The volunteers who remain, when the fortresses are supplied with garrisons, and the composite field batteries created, should then be organized as a field force of infantry, so that we should have in the volunteers a real defensive army, not merely a number of scattered regiments and corps. When this has been done, both for volunteers and militia, and when two army corps are actually ready, and not only, as at present, ready upon paper, we may begin to talk of whether more regulars are required, and for what purpose.

There is more interest taken in these matters than there was a few months ago when I began to write on the Position of European Politics. I trust that practical men who know what an army is, and that it cannot be improvised on the spur of the moment, are making their influence felt ; but I see signs of hesitation and want of thoroughness in carrying out the principles which are accepted, and I think the tendency to reduce the number

of officers altogether wrong. We shall want officers to train and lead something more than the British army if the troubles which I foresee come upon us; and we want also more officers for the militia and volunteers. But the training of those officers, and indeed of all, must be in practical work and not in show. One instance may suffice. I am told that the Swiss field artillery, while it has only sixteen days' drill a year, has so much practice in shooting that each gun fires sixty rounds. Our field artillery on the contrary has constant drill, though comparatively very little training in forced marches, and only goes to a practice camp once in three years. Which of the two methods is likely to turn out the better in war? It is said that we have at home few land ranges; but we have at least almost unlimited space in the water which surrounds us, and, though land ranges are preferable, it would be infinitely better to fire out to sea than not to practise at all; while the best practice, that at moving targets, is possible wherever there are tides.

I have now shown as well as was in my power the weak points in our military system, and there only remains for my last chapter a summary of results. I find my views unexpectedly confirmed in Mr. Stanhope's memorandum and the report of his Committee. I have pointed to the direction which, in my opinion and that of the best soldiers I could consult, should be taken in strengthening and improving the land forces. The navy is the first line of defence, but it runs the chance of being practically anchored off these shores and forced into a position of "the defensive

absolute," because our want of organization on land causes us to have a real terror of invasion. The result in war would probably be a fall from our high estate, by the concentration at home of our naval and military forces and the eventual starving out of the United Kingdom.

The net result of the late debates is another commission of inquiry. The English are curiously like the Turks in this. If there is urgent necessity for a reform they appoint a commission to sit upon it, and then consider that the reform is as good as effected.



## CHAPTER VII.

### NATIONAL DEFENCE.

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THE necessity for clearing the minds of Englishmen on the subject of their naval and military requirements was shown lately by a letter from General Alexander Fraser, which appeared on or about Good Friday. In order that I may not misrepresent the meaning of that officer I will quote textually some passages from his letter which express a view unhappily not uncommon. He says : "In considering this question I am convinced that our navy is not only our first but our only line of defence. . . . On the grounds I take up all land fortifications for these islands should be confined to field fortification thrown up by the troops and volunteers when the nature, or, at all events, the point of an attack by an enemy is developed. The protection of our coasts should devolve upon our navy. . . . Therefore, Englishmen, do not let your money be diverted to beyond what is actually necessary for the army at home and in India, or to fortifications beyond what is required for coaling stations and other special cases, but spend it on your navy till it is undoubtedly supreme, and let us have one not only

to protect our shores, but our commerce and our food. . . . I only advocate, without going into details, the main principle of relying upon our navy as our only line of defence, and spending our money thereon till its power is supreme." So far General Fraser speaks the mind of many persons who have not gone into the subject thoroughly, and merely cling to a general idea which would no doubt be heartily supported by a great many officers of the navy, but a little further on he leads us into confusion by sentences apparently inconsistent with what has gone before. He says, for example, "I do not mean to deprecate, in special cases, such assistance from land fortification (permanent) as may be necessary, in respect of our great fixed magazines, arsenals or dockyards, to supplement the main system of defence by our navy." Here is evidently a confusion of mind, a statement of conflicting particulars on which it would be impossible for any Government to act in estimating the naval and military requirements of the Empire, but this confusion is exactly what prevails in the mind of the British public generally. My object has been to clear up this disorder, and disentangle naval from military necessities, and the need of fortifications from the need of a field army.

Even General Fraser, though he says in one place that we might do without an army and yet remain a Great Power, is obliged in another portion of his letter to recognize the possibility of troops at home having to deal with an invading army. There are many other reasons why we must have an army, and those reasons are stronger and more pressing than

they used to be. No one in his senses will imagine that our great Indian possessions could be defended by a fleet against a Russian army advancing over the plains of Central Asia and the mountains of our North-West frontier. India then must have an army. Moreover, it is becoming generally recognized that India might need the support of organized bodies of troops which would have to be sent from other parts of the Empire. It is also beginning to be recognized that no defence can be carried out with success unless there is a power of delivering a return blow, which may be called a strategical counter-attack. To strengthen India and deliver this counter-attack there must exist other organized land forces than what is generally known as the Anglo-Indian army. We should be foolish to forget the complacency with which Continental Powers not long ago contemplated the idea of our fighting Russia without allies, and so taking off a great part of her pressure upon Europe. It is at least possible that such a condition of affairs might re-occur, and for it we must be prepared if we are to continue to hold India. Then there are various points in the Empire, especially the coaling stations, from which British power protects ever-increasing British trade, and these too must be defended by an army in the last resort. Then there are the various fortified points of our routes to India which require garrisons. Thus, when we examine the facts, it is made clear that land forces are as vitally necessary to our position in the world as even the navy, and one of the reasons for this is that the navy itself cannot exist and be kept in working

order abroad without the fixed positions which the land forces hold for it.

In the first chapter I accepted what had been apparently laid down as the irreducible minimum of land forces required. The minimum was "to defend the coaling stations, to be in a position to defend ourselves in India and at home, and to send, if need were, two army corps abroad as an expeditionary force." It is evident that for the strictest defensive purposes the various garrisons which are considered necessary for the fortresses and coaling stations should be ready and always at their places, so that if war were to break out suddenly we should not have to add to our other difficulties that of transporting comparatively small bodies of troops to all parts of the world. The two army corps, with their adjunct of a cavalry division and troops for the line of communications, should evidently be ready for immediate mobilization, or else we are not in a position to meet the difficulties which may be suddenly thrust upon us. Supposing that this moveable force were sent out of the kingdom, it ought to leave the British Isles in full confidence that the home territories are safe. In order to insure this it is necessary that there should be, in the first place, such a system of fortification for the great dockyards and arsenals that they may be secure against sudden attack from an enemy even in the absence of the fleet; and in the second place, there should be a home army ready to meet on the soil of Great Britain any force which it can be reasonably supposed that an enemy might succeed in landing.

When General Fraser, and the public (which leaves all these questions to experts), talk about the navy being the only line of defence and the possibility that we might remain a Great Power without having an army at all, it is quite clear that they have not taken the whole of the elements of the case into consideration. The naval supremacy of Great Britain rests not only upon the number of ships which we can put upon the sea, but, quite as much, upon the way in which by the aid of land forces we can protect the points of support for that navy, the arsenals, the coal yards whence our ships must draw their supplies when abroad, and the dockyards at home where men-of-war are built and refitted.

The case of the navy is similar to that of land forces in an invasion of an enemy's country. The further the army penetrates and the more it is divided into different bodies the more lines of communication will there be, and the greater will be the necessity for the protection of these lines of communication. The British navy is a force which may be said to invade of necessity the whole globe. There is not a point on the ocean to which our ships do not and must not penetrate. The lines of communication of the navy are therefore not only extremely numerous but complicated, and the least we can do is to make sure of the ocean communications by establishing and keeping always in working order places of safety, supply, and refitment for our host of ships. All this is the work of the army, and without that work the navy can be no defence at all for trade, for it could not keep the seas. These are points upon which I have to insist, be-

cause recent discussions have shown that they are constantly misunderstood or ignored.

It is equally necessary that we should have thoroughly organized armies for land duties. The reign of force of which I have often spoken is so marked at present that no Power can consider itself safe unless it is ready at any time to defend its interests. Within the last few years we have become, very much against our wishes, a Continental Power, an unfortunate and unpleasant fact which has not yet been brought clearly home to the mind of the people. We had some taste of its disagreeable features at the time of the Penjdeh incident, when there was a good deal of heart-searching as to whether indeed we were prepared for troubles which seemed likely to be forced upon us. Matters worked out fairly well on that particular occasion and may continue to do so for some little while longer, because, as I have shown, Russia is not ready, and will not be so until she has completed her system of Asiatic railways. When that time comes, should a crisis arise on our North-Western frontier, it will be no use to begin then to make preparations; the mischief will have been already done by the fact that we were not prepared. It is of the highest importance that now while we are safe, while no Power is threatening us, and while the question of organization can be settled and provision made for all probable contingencies, we should proceed deliberately and thoughtfully to readjust the military forces, so that they shall comply with the requirements which I have mentioned, when the time comes in which we shall find ourselves forced to fight for life.

With regard to home defence, it no doubt rests chiefly and in the first place on the navy, and it has been well said that our first line of defence should be considered to be not our shores but the coast line of the enemy. We have, however, to remember that while individual ships have become much more powerful than they were, they are also very much more costly, and the result is that they are not so numerous. The British fleet now is not to be compared in number to that which we had in the great wars of the past, and as a ship, however powerful, cannot be in two places at once, it is more difficult than it was formerly to protect the ocean lines of trade and to blockade the enemy's ports. In the American Civil War the North, though overwhelmingly superior at sea, never succeeded in a thorough blockade of any Southern port. Blockade runners drove a thriving trade, and many fortunes were made at the time in this new kind of smuggling. Proof enough was then given that in spite of all care on the part of a blockading fleet swift steamers can run into and out of blockaded harbours. Whatever may be the value of torpedo boats in great ocean contests, there is no question that they can make the work of blockading ports by night extremely difficult and dangerous. Our naval power has lost much in respect of its blockading capabilities, and it has also to a great extent lost the power of preventing the landing of troops upon our shores. If we consider what the British fleet would have to do in time of war, it will appear that no reasonable increase would enable it to perform all its functions, if to them were added the necessity of being the only line of defence for us at home.

Every ship which we force to lie idle, watching lest the coast should be invaded, is so much taken away from the power of the navy to carry out all those duties which would of necessity devolve upon it. Suppose, for instance, that we were at war, and had to make one of those demonstrations of counter-attack which every strategist agrees would be necessary, however individuals may differ as to the wisest direction for them. Are we at that time to hamper our naval resources and bring ourselves down to the level of a second-class Power in foreign waters, because we are so unprepared at home on land that we must keep half the fleet drawn up along our coasts? I imagine that all sensible men who will take the trouble to ask themselves this question will perceive at once that we ought to be in a position at any time to do what even General Fraser calls "deal with" "an isolated enemy's force," which should have landed on our shore, by means of "the land forces of the country." Otherwise, though not at war with two Powers, we should be, so far as the fleet was concerned, in the same position as if we had two enemies to deal with. If our home forces are not able to take care of themselves and give a good account of an enemy which might land in the temporary absence of the fleet, we can never enter into a war at all without considering the fact that our shores offer a standing temptation to our neighbours.

As matters stand at present public opinion would insist on keeping a very large portion of the fleet absolutely bound down, anchored as it were to the shores of Great Britain. In the event of war with a maritime Power it would soon be



found that the detention of the fleet at home was rendering the protection of our foreign trade impossible, for, while we remained the greatest naval Power in the world, our commerce would be destroyed, and our food supply would become limited and precarious. By the pressure of these various circumstances we should, not improbably, lose that commerce and that credit which make us what we are—the richest and the most powerful of all nations,—or, to save our trade, the fleet would have to be let go, and the heart of the Empire would remain without adequate defence. If fortifications had been neglected we should then begin to fortify in hot haste, and should find that works, whether permanent or merely field fortifications, would be of no use whatever without the guns which could not be constructed except by months or perhaps years of labour. All these considerations taken together make it clear that among the most important points for the nation to consider and insist upon is this, that the forces kept at home ought to be so organized and the defences generally to be in such condition that we may consider ourselves ready to repel on land any invading army which would be likely to be landed by an enemy which had temporarily the command of the sea. The strength of such a force has been stated on authority to be possibly 150,000 men. Our system of defence and of home armies ought to be such that we could beat within the country such an army supposing it to be landed upon our shores.

There are then four main objects, in addition to the local defence of coaling stations and of fortresses, to which the

country, when it can be persuaded to think on these matters, should direct its attention.

I. We should have a fleet strong enough in fast cruisers to make all our ocean lines of communication secure, and at the same time strong enough also in plated ships, heavily armed ships, or rams, to act as the first line of defence against invasion by shutting in, as far as possible, the enemy's fleets.

II. As the fleet cannot act on the Indian North-West frontier, we need an army for India, which, good as it is at present, will have to keep pace in its future development with that of Russian resources on the Afghan border.

III. We admittedly require, also, an expeditionary force able, in the event, for example, of war with Russia, to deliver a counter-stroke to ease off the pressure on the Indian force.

IV. We cannot feel safe without a home-service army to act as a second line to the navy for home defence; in fact such a force as could deal with an enemy who, during the temporary absence of the fleet or after a check sustained by it, should invade our coasts.

On none of these heads, except, possibly, Number II., are we at present in a satisfactory position, and the inquiry which is about to begin will not deal with our defences as a whole. The power of the fleet should be calculated upon what the navy would have to do in case of a great war under such conditions as I have named, and Lord Brassey's cautious words, and still more Lord Brassey's tables, show how far it falls short of this ideal. With regard to the

second point, our Indian army is maintained in its present state of efficiency at the expense of the home army, and the attempt to apply the same terms of service to conditions so different is and must be a failure. With regard to the third head, while Government and Parliament are calculating upon a certain force as the irreducible minimum, I have shown that we do not possess that force. This point I claim to have established so clearly that the Government of the day can no longer pretend that we possess it, or that the measures which have been taken up to this time will ever give it us. Some approaches have indeed been made to proper efficiency, and for them, so far as they go, it would appear that we have to thank the persistent representations of Lord Wolseley. But just as some twelve years ago the Government of that day refused to carry out the recommendations of the military authorities as set forth in the mobilization scheme of that period, so now, even when we have levelled down to the two army corps and the cavalry division, the Government of this period still refuses to make that small force ready for the field. For the first corps the troops are, indeed, provided, but the horses are not, unless they are obtained by breaking up and destroying all the elements of the second corps. As to equipment the first corps is not complete: Mr. Stanhope distinctly confessed it, not apologizing, but deprecating censure. As for the second corps, it is perfectly clear that it is devoid of its necessary equipment, which would have to be made for it, thus wasting a great deal of valuable time. It is still less provided with horses than the first corps, and there appears

no escape from the certainty that if war were to break out while we remain in our present condition the first army corps might indeed be sent out either as a reinforcement or for a counter-stroke, but in order to dispatch it the second corps would be absolutely destroyed for all military purposes. We have clearly to understand that this state of affairs continues in spite of the expressed opinion of Lord Wolseley and the other officers most responsible for the readiness of the army to take the field. Lord Wolseley thinks this wrong, Sir Frederick Roberts thinks it wrong, Mr. Stanhope has distinctly acknowledged that the deficiency exists, and we know that the cost of making the two army corps ready for the field, except, I suppose, as far as horses are concerned, would be somewhat under £300,000. The steps to be taken and the articles to be procured are not such as can be taken and procured on the spur of the moment; and until these two army corps are ready we are as insecure in our Asiatic possessions as we are at home.

With regard to the fourth point, the organization of a home-service army, the militia and volunteers, who ought to form a defensive army in order to deal with an invader, are, however good man by man, or considered as small bodies of men in battalions, absolutely without any organization whatever or any preparation for organization as a field army. In this connection I am forced to return to the question of the field artillery. I noticed that a leader writer in the *Times*, speaking of the manœuvres of last Easter, regretted that "Mr. Stanhope's scheme, under which the volunteers were to provide their own guns, has not as yet borne better fruit.

We do not gather that—apart from the batteries of the Honourable Artillery Company—a single field battery has made its appearance this Easter, unless, which is presumably not the case, the guns of the Cinque Ports volunteers are field pieces.” Now, it is the case that there is no such scheme in existence; not the slightest attempt has been made to provide a real field artillery either for volunteers or for any other force which would assist them to create a home field army. It ought to be generally understood that the War Office has not even contemplated the creation of efficient volunteer field batteries. The guns of the Cinque Ports volunteers referred to in the article are not field guns but 40-pounders, and these, with some 20-pounders, are the guns to be issued to the volunteers. On the 16th April, Mr. Stanhope took one more step, under great pressure, by promising the issue of some 16-pounders, which are field guns, though old-fashioned; but I have again to say that there can be no field artillery, properly so called, without a trained staff of drivers. Nobody, or at least nobody of military knowledge, pretends that these guns with the volunteers who will work them represent anything like field artillery. They are intended to be placed in fixed positions to resist an invading army, and are, for the most part, so heavy and unmanageable that, if the invaders attacked the flank of the position, the guns have no such manœuvring power as to be able to change their front rapidly in order to repel the attack. All modern writers on artillery, and all officers with whom I have spoken, agree that the essence of field artillery lies in its mobility, in its power

of making rapid marches, and of being transferred from one part of the field of battle to another. The position guns of the volunteers, if such marches were attempted, would be left behind like the Maxim gun on the tricycle the other day, and they could not manœuvre on a field of battle. It is therefore strictly accurate to say that, under the conditions which I have mentioned, there is no field artillery at all left for what General Fraser calls "dealing with" an invading army. As field artillery is one of the component parts of any fighting and manœuvring force, the conclusion cannot be resisted that not only is there no such force, but that no such force can possibly be created so long as we are absolutely deficient in field guns, having a much smaller number to put in the field than Switzerland, Roumania, or even Belgium.

As to the condition of our fortresses both at home and abroad I have said enough already. I have quoted in my last chapter the conclusions of the Committee. I have shown that in this question of fortifications we shall not arrive at the irreducible minimum of readiness for defence under about three years, while there is no question at all of undertaking a complete defence. This is little understood, but it is some comfort to think that at last a few members of the House of Commons have taken courage and struggled with the Government on the question irrespective of party lines, which have not and ought not to have anything to do with questions of national defence. I cannot, however, myself profess to feel satisfied with the result.

It is, then, plain that great as is our expenditure, it does not produce a sufficient fleet, adequate preparation in our

fortresses, a satisfactory army for foreign service, or an organization suitable for home defence in case of invasion. How is it that the general public fails to find out this condition of affairs? The defects are always hidden from view because the methods of fulfilling the various functions of an army are, in the case of the British forces, left indefinite. Since no army corps, or even division, has a real existence, nobody can possibly tell whether it is ready or not except by going through a great amount of labour in learning to understand a subject which is neither popular nor easy. The fortresses are nominally there. The public sees certain works, and does not know that they are not armed, or, if armed, that the guns are of antiquated and obsolete patterns. Up to this time I believe there are in the ironclad forts of Portsmouth, which are supposed to protect that dockyard and bid defiance to all the fleets in the world, exactly two heavy guns of modern construction.\* I am told, and the public is told, that there will soon be more, but then we were told the same thing several years ago. We laugh at the wooden guns of the Chinese, but in connection with the recent sham attack upon Langston Harbour, I see that it is stated that if Fort Cumberland had been armed with the guns that it will probably one day receive, the result of the attack would have been

\* On this point too I have formerly understated the case in estimating the capability of modern ordnance, as compared with our preparations to prevent bombardment of our great dockyards and coaling stations. It seems that a 9-inch wire gun was fired last month with a heavy charge and high elevation. The projectile ranged nearly twelve miles and described a curve through the air which would have carried it higher than the top of Mont Blanc if it had been fired from the level of the sea. How could our old guns defend a space filled with inflammable material against such ordnance as this?

different. It is, however, many years since the deficient armament of Fort Cumberland was first pointed out. As matters stand no one, without much trouble, can arrive at an estimate of our want of preparation. Again, the public sees that there are garrisons at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and other English stations, and hears of their existence in the Mediterranean, but we are not told, and very few men understand, that those garrisons are not half what would be requisite in case of war, and that the troops now composing them would not, even as reinforced, be the garrisons for war. For a considerable time the first army corps contained within its organization many of the regiments which formed the garrisons of the Mediterranean fortresses. The country is hoodwinked by the repeated presentation of the same troops, who, however, would seem to be expected to perform all sorts of different functions, like the stage army, which appears and disappears so rapidly that children fail to recognize its identity and multiply its numbers by its appearances. At the time of the Jubilee reviews in Woolwich, London, and Aldershot, paragraphs appeared in some of the papers saying how satisfactory it was to see that so many troops existed for the formation of the two army corps. The same troops, however, had passed again and again before the eyes of the reviewing officers and the public. Yet even then it was impossible, as I have shown, to produce at Aldershot anything approaching to the organization of two army corps, though a large number of volunteers, who would probably be fortress troops in case of war, were presented on the occasion, and called a second army corps.



Nothing is organized and ready for war, therefore nothing can be inspected and criticized as being what it professes to be. Yet how we have come down! From the eight army corps which were formerly borne on the Army List as the existing force with which England could take the field, at least within her own shores, to the two army corps of last year; and now this year to the single division at Aldershot, which is all that the Minister of War pretends to be able to produce in immediate readiness for a campaign! We must be thankful for small mercies, and if it be indeed true that the Aldershot division is completely ready in all respects, I am glad to hear it. In that case, and in order that those who are most experienced and therefore most sceptical may have some satisfaction in the matter, why not commence a proper inspection of the whole army by producing this Aldershot division, with all its troops, its horses, its carriages, its guns, and its ammunition columns, in fighting order for autumn manœuvres or something of the kind this year? Let us at least have one unit complete, no matter how small—so complete that it may be a type—and let us see its action in the field either in marches or manœuvres. In saying this I am sure that I shall have on my side all the officers who really interest themselves in the production of a true army for this country. All that the country has yet seen has been like a shifting mass of sand, any portion of which taken up in the hand for examination slips through the fingers while one is trying to look at it. Obviously, in order to make sure what we really have, the first thing to be done is to fix the various units in their places, give them some self-government, a pro-

cess which I call decentralization, and then treat each such force as what it is intended to be and nominally is, namely a brigade or a division, or whatever title we choose to give to it. It is not necessary that in the English army every large tactical unit should be of the same size, and I have shown, in speaking of the German army, how probable it is that the nominal strength of army corps will be enormously increased, perhaps even doubled, in future wars. It does matter very much, however, that if we have ten thousand men, or twenty thousand, or a hundred thousand, they should be organized in proper proportions of the arms, and that there should actually be provided everything necessary for their taking the field in case of war. Otherwise they are not an army, nor even the units of an army, but are merely a mass of men with guns.

The larger organization of the forces should be as I have proposed. First should be a foreign-service army, with its various garrisons and troops for the field, all of moderately long service, and all being actually what they call themselves. Then there would also be a home-service army, which again would be organized as garrisons and a field army, each part being completed for its own special work, and an end being made to the perpetual shifting of troops from one part of the stage to another, and to the pretence that there is a garrison ready for a fortress because it contains some troops which really belong to the field army. It has already been settled that the garrisons of the home fortresses would, in case of war, be chiefly militia and volunteers. Then let this knowledge become public property; let us know what militia and

volunteers are actually intended for the garrisons, and let those corps have their training for the work which they will be expected to perform, instead of being paraded at Aldershot as representing a second corps of a field army. Whatever remains from the garrisons of the fortresses, whether regulars, militia, or volunteers, should find definite places, either in the two army corps, which are the field army available for active service abroad, or in the home defensive field army; but it is foolish to call anything a field army until it is organized, in place of being left as an incoherent mass of shifting sand.

We know, I repeat, for even Mr. Stanhope has told us, that the celebrated two army corps are not yet ready to take the field in case of war. How much more unready then must be that enormous proportion of auxiliary troops which finds no place in either of those corps, but to which we must trust for home defence if the two corps were sent away! I am sure that serious officers will support me in the contention that nothing is an army which is not organized as such and provided with the various requisites for war, and that so far the money which is spent in keeping up the men and the muskets is spent in vain, and is therefore practically wasted. It is the old case of the horse-shoes and the nails, and all that is spent upon the shoes is wasted money unless the very minor sum which is required for the nails is also spent. Better, indeed, would it be to spend, if absolutely necessary, less upon the men, either by reducing their numbers, or, as I prefer, by having shorter service for home needs, than to continue to keep up an immense numerical roll and refuse to

pay the minor sums required to put on the horse-shoes or to turn the sand, of which I have spoken, into rock. By reducing the length of service for the home army we should, if we kept up the same number of troops, make such economies as would be sufficient to place the whole in a condition for war.

I have tried to show in detail how all these things might be done, and further how the principle of voluntary service might be carried out to its legitimate conclusions, especially by resting the home defence more than we do on the militia and volunteers, which should each be raised a step in position as well as in duties. The militia would become available for general service in war though not in peace, and the volunteers be liable to be called out for home service whenever the country is so denuded of regular troops as to need the services of the home-staying army. Volunteers often complain that they are not taken seriously enough. They have been partly right in their contention. Nor must they ever cease complaining until they have been thoroughly organized for whatever their duties are to be, and until those duties are perfectly clear to themselves and the country at large. Here is something definite for them to aim at, and they may depend upon it that until they do aim at some such definite usefulness, they will never be taken so seriously as they deserve.

There is one most useful body of armed men who hardly ever appear or are spoken of except when there is real work to be done, and of whom I have said as yet little or nothing. I mean the force called the marines, a most admirable body

of soldiers who are more or less kept out of sight because it is difficult to say to whom they belong or what their functions ought to be in war. The French have a very large force of marines which they use as colonial troops and will probably one day or other turn into a colonial army. I am inclined to think that the marines as a naval force are rather a survival of the past, when a first-rate man-of-war carried something like a thousand men of all kinds, and could afford to land a considerable body of men for shore operations. A ship of war at that time was a hollow vessel filled with armed men, whatever they were called, whereas a first-rate man-of-war is now a sort of floating factory combined with a battery of guns, and the principal duties of the men are to work machinery of one sort or another rather than to engage in personal combat. In the old days a couple of line-of-battle ships could between them have probably thrown on shore a force as large as that produced by the whole fleet after the Alexandria riots. At the time of which I have spoken every ship had a sufficient body of men, chiefly marines, but also spare sailors, which could be thrown ashore to act either in concert with or instead of ordinary troops. The marines were then of the greatest possible value as components of every fleet. I am inclined to think that that admirable and distinguished corps would probably be of more use now as soldiers than as sailors. If I may judge by what has happened in our last little wars, the marines have the work of both soldiers and sailors and the prizes of neither. There is almost always a contingent of them used on such occasions. They are conspicuous for their steady-

ness, for the good service which they do, and generally for the remarkably small rewards they receive. Among other functions which their present nature and character would appear to suggest is that of forming the nucleus for garrisons of coaling stations, which, as I have pointed out, should be held for the most part by local troops whose military knowledge would be given to them, and whose steadiness would be supported by small bodies of very good, even picked, troops from the regular army, or we may now say, perhaps, from the marines. The most important functions which they would have to perform would be to receive and return the bombardment of an enemy's ships. It is therefore important that some very good and well-trained artillerymen should form the basis of the organization. It is worthy of our remarkable military institutions that the marine artillery, who are supposed to be available for working heavy guns on board ship, are chiefly famous for their excellent powers of marching past on shore, in the accurate performance of which achievement (during land parades at Portsmouth) they are held to be rivalled only by the Guards. They constitute one of the finest bodies, if not the finest in the whole British service, but why they should form a body separate from both sailors and soldiers is not so easy to say, especially in these days when garrison artillery for the coaling stations is much wanted. No set of men exist in the two services better calculated to give tone to those local troops which Lord Brassey agrees with me should be created. The opinion of Lord Brassey is most valuable, and confirms me in the views which I had formed.

So chaotic is our present state that many soldiers, refusing to believe that England will consent to pay for a proper voluntary system, still sigh for a conscription. Doubtless if we contemplate the principle which governs the organization of modern armies it appears that they all, even in the case of the most backward nations, as well as in that of such leaders of civilization as France and Germany, lay their foundation of military strength in the good will of the people generally, and the voluntary adoption by the public of the yoke of military discipline and restraint for some portion of their lives. Only in the United Kingdom is there no recognition of the principle that the duty of every citizen is to bear arms in his country's defence in time of trial. I do not stop, I repeat, to consider the question of applying this principle to England. It cannot be applied in the present tone of public opinion. Such being the case it would be weak and foolish to grumble because our institutions and our national lines of thought are not the same as those of other peoples. We must frankly accept things as they are, and make the best of the fact that we have our own special source of pride in that all the troops we place in line are volunteers, under no legal necessity to enter their country's service; but, if we boast of this British speciality, let us at least make the most of it. If it only consists in the fact that, the army and navy being well paid, men who are out of work or who wish to lead a roving life are inclined to enlist either for the land or the sea forces, there does not appear to me to be much to pride ourselves upon, and it is certainly not a matter of congratulation that the rich and well-to-do take so very little

interest in bringing the forces to a condition of readiness for war. If there is no legal liability to service there is surely a moral liability to give a little time to the consideration of how we really stand, and whether we are safe, or in a condition which risks not only the lives of soldiers, as was shown in the Crimea, but also the national safety, as may very likely be shown before many years are over. There is a great deal of public virtue in the British Empire, but there is also amongst us a very strong tendency to pursue individual aims, leaving organization and preparation for war entirely in the hands of what are called the experts. Unfortunately, the experts are not those who have power to bring matters to the condition which they desire. Lord Charles Beresford is an expert, and he has been lately telling us how impossible he and the other experts at the Admiralty found it to get their way. The experts have spoken strongly with regard to the army both in evidence before committees and commissions, and in direct intercourse with various Ministers of War. Such men as Lord Wolseley and Sir Frederick Roberts, to say nothing of a host of minor men, are sufficiently agreed to make their differences mere matters of detail. For instance, on the question of decentralization, it would be difficult now to find in the army any considerable party in favour of the existing system, or in opposition to the general principle that decentralization with thorough inspection is the only means of being certain that organized bodies of troops exist and are in working order.

The principle of decentralization is far-reaching, and the necessity for it is evidently penetrating deep into the minds



of British military students. For instance, I have lately had my attention called to the necessity for decentralization in framing orders in the field, by a pamphlet by Captain Norman Bray. That officer points out, as others indeed have done before him, how destructive to efficiency in the field is the practice of the centralized authority issuing long and explanatory orders instead of trusting to a proper chain of responsibility through subordinates. Captain Norman Bray compares the instructions issued to the highly trained German army in 1870 with those considered necessary for the less accurately trained French army of that date. In the former case all the orders issued by the highest military authorities were extraordinarily short, and gave only the most general directions. On the French side an attempt was made to issue such elaborate orders as to provide for every contingency; but this issue of orders is only an offshoot of a system. Centralization in the general government of the army will inevitably produce centralization in everything. The brains of officers are kneaded and pressed into shape, or rather out of shape, until they become in military affairs hardly reasoning individuals. There is no question on which the opinion of the leading military thinkers of the day, both in this and other countries, is more clear than on the evils of centralization; yet centralization continues. I have done my best to show how it works in many respects, and how we should set about the production of a better system. One important step would have to be a cessation of what I have styled perpetual motion, a habit of which no one has spoken more contemptuously than Lord Wolseley. It is

quite evident that, if upon so great a question as this nearly all the real experts of the army are agreed and yet cannot get their way, it is no use to talk of leaving questions to the experts. My main object in writing these papers has been to draw attention to the necessity which exists for the country to take an interest in its own military affairs, and to exercise some pressure through Parliament upon those Ministers of War who, while responsible for the organization and administration of the army, are far from being experts.

Just as there is general agreement among the experts as to decentralization, so too of other questions, such as that of separate armies for home and foreign service. It is becoming clear to the minds of intelligent officers generally that, whatever difficulties may stand in the way, there is apparently no chance of producing a good working military system on any other terms than the practical separation of the armies, by whatever name it may be called. There may be differences of opinion in details, but there seems to be a growing agreement upon the general principle. Again, all those who are far-seeing recognize that, until we have had some military catastrophe, the regular army must remain small, and therefore it is only common sense to get all that we possibly can of military duty and military efficiency out of the militia and volunteers. On the question of invasion, the country generally, and even members of Parliament and Ministers, have a general impression that the silver streak is an absolute defence against the possibility of invasion, and all sorts of sententious or witty

remarks are quoted in this connection, but if we turn to the opinion of experts we find that it is all in the opposite direction. The head of the Intelligence Department, General Brackenbury, when asked his views on the subject, was obliged to be somewhat careful in his expressions as became his position, but even he went so far as to say distinctly that under certain conditions which might probably occur there would be nothing to prevent an enemy landing, or attempting to land, 150,000 men upon our shores. I have good reason to believe that the opinion of the chiefs of the army is so strong in this direction that the present ideas of the defence of the country are based, not upon the possibility of preventing a landing, but upon the concentration of a sufficient force to fight a battle and throw back the enemy's army after it has landed. If this be the case, and I think it cannot be denied, surely the whole question of our duties as civilians, yet as Englishmen, should be laid before the public in some authoritative fashion. Take, for instance, the question of the supply of horses, without which no army can possibly be mobilized. I have already mentioned that plans were made for the obtaining such a supply. But when the former mobilization scheme was devised, the Government of the time did not place the question before the country in all its simplicity, and even up to this moment there has been no working measure proposed definitely and in such a form that the British public might have an opportunity of deciding what they would do. The experts have now made their recommendations, as they made them some

ten or twelve years ago. If they are treated with the same indifference as before, we shall be no more ready to mobilize our one or two army corps than we were to mobilize the eight which we were formerly supposed to possess.

Under these conditions, we may ask, how is the country to leave questions "to be decided by experts," when we have all the experts agreed on certain main points, but find ourselves no nearer a solution? A sop has lately been thrown to the watch-dogs in the shape of the pretence that by the new organization the military authorities are now responsible. How can they possibly be responsible when their demands are refused, and when the measures found to be necessary in order to make the great dockyards even moderately safe are to be spread over a period of three years, lest the constituencies should fail to receive the sweet mouthful which Mr. Goschen has lately offered them? It has now been elicited from the Government that the harbour of refuge at Dover, so necessary from a strategical point of view, so often recommended by Commissions, and so nearly undertaken a short time ago, is not to be created. Here is one of the ways in which money is spent to no purpose, and therefore wasted. A great convict prison has been built at heavy expense on the cliffs to the east of Dover for the sole object of the construction of the requisite breakwater. It seems that all this expense is to be thrown away; and one of the most beautiful portions of our shores will probably carry for ever that extraordinary eyesore—a convict prison—as a monument of the military

inefficiency which is too apt to characterize party government.

A good deal has been lately said about the food supply in case of war, and I find that there is now some danger lest the flank of those who wish for the efficiency of the land forces should be turned by a most insidious argument. It is said by some, who have apparently taken a leaf out of Lord Randolph Churchill's book, that, because a failure of the fleet to protect our commerce would produce great scarcity in these islands, therefore it is of no use to talk about invasion. If the fleet, they argue, were in difficulties and unable to prevent a landing, we should be made to give in at once, by the application to us of the process of starvation; therefore, the objectors to military efficiency say, it is no use to provide against invasion, or even for the defence of dockyards, because if these could ever be attacked the country must already be in such a condition that it must yield without a fight. Now the fact is that no such process as absolute starvation would be likely to occur, though there might be very great distress. The American Civil War showed how impossible it was to prevent blockade runners from throwing supplies even into the few and well-watched harbours of the South. It is impossible to conceive such a complete collapse of British naval power that the whole of our coasts could be completely blockaded and no provisions at all arrive within the United Kingdom; but it is quite conceivable, and has happened in all wars, that there may be temporary checks to the navy, or that circumstances may for a time deprive the home islands of the close protection

of the fleet. At any rate, it is quite certain that a condition of absolute want of power to defend ourselves at home cripples our naval strength enormously by forcing us, in case of war, to retain, and so neutralize, a large proportion of the ships which we possess, and those especially which are of the greatest power. It is absurd to sit down deliberately and say that in the case of a single defeat of the fleet, or of its being lured away from the defence of the Channel, the nation which has created the greatest empire which the world has ever seen should throw up its hands and declare itself so beaten that its enemies may proceed with impunity to take from it what they please.

Although Colonel Maurice has attacked me in his articles, and perhaps still more in his book, with a virulence which I do not quite understand, I am glad to be at one with him when it is possible, and I adopt with pleasure some of the words he has written in his last two pages. He says, and I agree with him, that "It is idle to deny that many of those who wish them (the Government) best are afraid that both at the Admiralty and at the War Office Lord Randolph's escapade has had too much influence. The Government perfectly well know how very much truth there is in the charges against our condition of preparedness which both Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Charles Dilke have made. In a very short time indeed, if they (the Government) do not carry into practice the reforms which have been worked out on paper under Mr. Smith's impulse, they will be responsible when the hour of reckoning comes, which is now fast approaching. We have cautiously throughout spoken,

not of what our navy is, but of what it ought to be. We have as cautiously spoken of the two *corps d'armée* and the cavalry division towards which we were working. The reduction of the Horse Artillery will have been an inexcusable blunder if, in return for that great sacrifice, we are not to find, when the next Army Estimates are presented, that actual progress has been made towards a real and effective provision for the mobilization of those forces." I am afraid that no one who takes the trouble to work through Mr. Stanhope's memorandum and his explanation during the Parliamentary debate can fail to be struck by the fact that uncommonly little progress has been made towards "a real and effective provision for the mobilization of those forces." I am even quite certain that no such thorough provision will ever be made until the general public begins to take an interest in its own military affairs. It will then become aware that the chief military experts of the day both in this and in other countries recognize that if England is plunged into a great war, invasion will be not only possible but probable, or that prevention of invasion can only be attained by keeping in the home waters a fleet equal in strength to the whole maritime forces of the antagonistic Powers. This latter supposition would involve the delivering up to the tender mercies of cruisers the whole of our enormous ocean trade. It would involve also that partial starvation of which I have spoken. So far as I can see, and so far as those whom I have consulted can see, not only the most economical but the only way of providing against such a contingency is so to organize the land forces at home that

they shall be, as General Fraser in one side of his argument supposes that they will be, able to deal conclusively with an army which may have landed on these shores.

As I write this concluding chapter I read in the papers of to-day—the 9th April—three different statements bearing on the subject of our naval and military power, which are all of them worthy of notice. One is contained in a letter to the *Times*, in which the writer shows that we are not in a position to do the work at sea which the principles of the party represented by Colonel Maurice require. Supposing the facts to be correct, it appears that in 1801 we were stronger in line-of-battle ships than the four next naval Powers—France, Russia, Spain, and Holland—combined; yet a little later we were barely able to keep off invasion when threatened by only France and Spain. We had then comparatively speaking a small ocean trade to defend. At present, with a large mercantile marine to be defended and the danger of hunger at home to be guarded against, we have, it appears, hardly any advantage in line-of-battle ships against the second and fourth Powers, France and Russia. The writer might have added that our finest iron-clads are without their guns, and that no one can tell when guns will be ready to put in them, while France has guns to spare. The danger of invasion, if we continue in our present courses, is real, although we have armed men enough at home to make invasion impossible, or at any rate, a reckless mistake on the part of an enemy, if we would but organize the forces which we possess and keep them prepared to take the field. The second statement is contained



in a paragraph quoted from the *Pioneer* of Allahabad. It says that "the artillery in India is for all practical purposes rendered useless for war in consequence of being equipped with obsolete guns. The force in India . . . is armed with obsolete 9-pounder muzzle-loaders which excited the derision of foreign officers at the Delhi manœuvres." Supposing this also to be true (there are not yet enough field guns of a newer type to arm even our much smaller force of field and horse artillery at home), and knowing as we do how thoroughly our weaknesses are understood by the staffs of Continental Powers, it is by no means astonishing to read the third statement, which is a quotation from the *Cologne Gazette*. That paper says: "The disproportion between the size of the British Empire, that encompasses the whole world, and the ridiculous weakness of its central military power, forces English statecraft to look out for a foreign sword to fight England's battles, and just as in great things, so in small matters does England follow this clever system of rolling off her difficulties upon somebody else." Well for us will it be if we can always do so, but there are many troubles advancing towards us which we may have to bear alone, and as Lord Salisbury has decided not to form those alliances which were open to him, as indeed any other statesman in his circumstances would have decided, we must make up our minds to the possibility of having at some future time to stand alone in a serious contest. The system of defence by proxy, the idea of which seems so attractive to some people, would certainly be an easy and a pleasant escape from the usual lot of man, if only we could be sure of

finding a proxy at the right moment. But even if alliances are formed they do not always lead to the best feeling between the allies when the occasion for them is past. In the Napoleonic reign of force, alliances changed with the rapidity of the kaleidoscope. Poland has been twice sacrificed to the convenience of the strong Powers, and the Austro-Prussian alliance which subdued Denmark in 1864, was the prelude to the fate of Austria in 1866. If the British Empire is to be secure, its safety must rest on the strength of its own means of defence.

I have spoken just now of one great weakness of our position in India, but that is one comparatively easy to remedy. There are others which are apparently more difficult to be dealt with, and even more serious in their results. In our war against weak troops in Burmah, and even in our peaceful occupation of portions of Beluchistan, we have found immense difficulty caused to the Indian Government and to our officers by the presidential military system. I have already called attention to the strong report of the Army Commission against that system, in which they pointed out that its continuance would be fatal to vigour and efficiency in the conduct of military operations out of India. The Afghan war had shown the breakdown of the existing system, and both Lord Lytton and Lord Ripon had recommended its abolition, which had been vetoed by Lord Hartington and Lord Kimberley. It is well known that Lord Dufferin has taken the same view as his two predecessors, and that his Government have supported him as their Governments supported them. Lord Randolph Churchill did not, indeed,

refuse, in the curt and peremptory fashion of Lord Kimberley, to consider the recommendations which came to him from India, but he desired that the change should wait for the general inquiry into the affairs of India to which he was pledged. That inquiry has, however, been dropped, and the result of no change being made has been that we have had the same difficulties to contend with in Burmah that we had previously to contend with in Afghanistan. The garrison of Burmah, so far as its native infantry is concerned, is furnished by the armies of all three presidencies, but mainly from that of Madras. The general at present commanding in Upper Burmah is under the Commander-in-Chief in India, while Lower Burmah is, in a military sense, under the Government of Madras. Under the arrangements necessarily contemplated for the future, the Madras Commander-in-Chief can only be communicated with through the Madras Government, and can report only to them, and the result will be delay and disagreement. If the General Commanding the Troops does not hold entirely the same opinions as the Chief Commissioner, the Chief Commissioner will appeal to the Government of India, and the general to the Government of Madras. The most extraordinary difficulties have been found, even in the comparatively simple case of Beluchistan. At first the garrison of Quetta was supplied from the Bombay army, but the general commanding was placed under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief in India. His Excellency, however, had no voice as regarded the selection of the regiments which were to go to Quetta in relief nor in the inspection of the troops; and as regards administration the force remained a

part of the Bombay army. When lately the garrison was increased there were sent to it troops of the Madras establishment, and there have been occasions when the force in the single place of Quetta has belonged to four armies—now reduced to three by the abolition of the separate administration of the Punjaub frontier force. In consequence of the refusal of Lord Hartington and Lord Kimberley to assent to this most important military reform, and of the inaction of Lord Randolph Churchill, if we were to be attacked in Afghanistan we should find ourselves with three separate Commissariat-Transport Departments, with three separate Medical Departments, with three Commanders-in-Chief regulating appointments to the regiments and staff of the local armies. When military operations are undertaken outside the frontiers, the Government of India have no effective control over the expenditure, and have only the most round-about information as to what “establishments” are being employed. There can be no doubt that if evil days were to fall upon us the system would be at once abolished, but the time would be the worst possible for the introduction of the change, which is one vital to our safety in India, but one which, to be safely introduced, must be introduced in time of peace. Proposals have been recently made by the Government of India, hopeless of getting their own way, for a partial reform; but nothing but a root-and-branch abolition of the whole presidential system, with its separate Governors sent out from England and its separate Commanders-in-Chief, will suffice, and the only question is whether we are

to make the reform at once or have it forced upon us bit by bit, and possibly made too late.

Some of the incidents connected with the presidential system are positively laughable. One defence of the presidential military system is that it enables us to recruit men of different races and different religions from different parts of India, although the Government of India never as a fact recommended centralization in this matter, but propose to keep decentralized forces in Madras and Bombay and in two divisions of Bengal—a Hindoo division and a Punjaub division—all of which would be recruited in different parts of India. But under the present system the Bombay authorities are constantly trying to recruit surreptitiously in the Punjaub, notwithstanding a distinct prohibition of such a practice by the Government of India; and if the Madras and Bombay Governments were left to themselves in the matter it would seem as though the whole Indian army would be recruited in the Punjaub only. The amount of friction, the amount of useless trouble, and the amount of danger in the present system can be adequately grasped only by officers who have themselves had experience of it, or by those who have served in a war in which operations were conducted by allies. As one of the best men concerned in the government of India has said to me, "Heaven help us if we have to go to war before this essential reform is carried out. It would be like going to war as a body of allies against one centralized power, with all the disadvantages of such a system and none of the advantages; for the local governments, which are still nominally invested with the adminis-

tration of their armies, are not responsible for any of the expenditure, and have nothing whatever to do either with finding the money or with accounting for it."

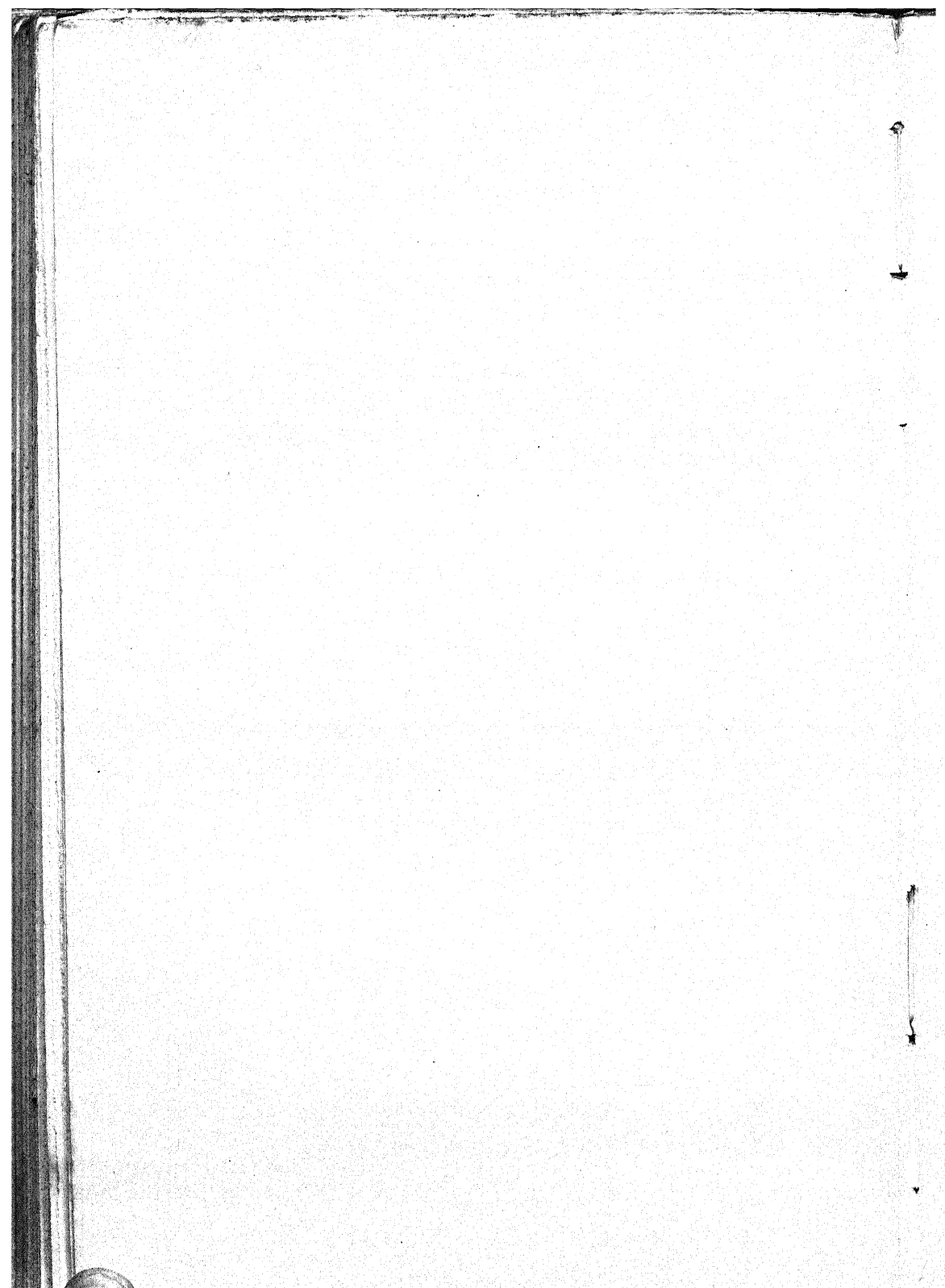
My first object has been to point out how seriously our national military strength falls behind our requirements and how unready we always are, in spite of our huge expenditure. That object has been attained, for even the Minister of War has confessed the fact, with such abundance of detail as throws into the shade my mild statements which were at first called pessimistic. My second object was to show that what we want most is not a great and expensive increase of the regular army, but an endeavour to make the best possible use of what we have already, by proper organization and by utilizing to the utmost the voluntary principle, which best suits our national temper and that of the colonies. Military systems, like all other institutions, are apt to grow old and decay, and as, during the wars which followed the French Revolution, the model created by the genius of Frederick was shattered by the new type developed under that strangest of all mottoes for a military force—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," so do I believe that the British army as influenced by Wellington is not rightly modelled for the work which may be required of it in this epoch of armed nations always ready for instant service. We stand in presence of new forces the power of which is almost incalculable, and, while I admit that there are in the army a great number of able men, perhaps more than there ever were, capable both of creating new systems and of leading us to victory, I am inclined to think that their characters have been formed in

spite of an obsolete and decaying system, and that they are restrained by the incapacity of others and the carelessness of the country from exercising the influence which their talents and energy ought to command. If the question were one of commerce, liberty, or progress in civil affairs, the nation would be interested and would bring the resources of its accumulated knowledge to bear on the subject. But being, as it is, a question without the right settlement of which neither commerce nor liberty is safe, the public is so little in earnest about it that politicians are allowed to play with it, and the serious needs of self-defence are sacrificed to the poor aim of keeping constituencies in good-humour. Nothing can or will be done by Governments of any party till the nation can be roused to some expression of public opinion; and that opinion has to be formed before it can be expressed. In the reign of force which now prevails throughout Europe carelessness as to our power of defence is culpable beyond possibility of exaggeration, for we may have to defend not only our individual interests as a nation, but all that enormous influence for the good of mankind which is at present exercised in the remotest parts of the earth by an enormous empire bent on preventing war and on spreading the blessings of peace.

An Australian writer, in a fine passage, has said of me that I am wont to turn with weariness and despondency from European international animosity or suspicion, and military rule, to the splendid spectacle, gratifying indeed to English pride, of young nations, offshoots of the United Kingdom, growing up to power and greatness in America

and Australia—far away from the crushing burdens and the feuds of the old world. That is so, and England has yet this upon her side, that, in a higher degree even than Russia, she is indestructible, and that come what disaster may to her insufficient armies and her overburdened fleets, her race, her laws and liberties must continue to flourish in half the world. But to the home-staying Englishman of the present day that may seem but poor consolation, and it has been my hope in writing on the army that I might be able to do some little towards helping the tiny old home country to keep her place awhile as the mother of the flock.





## INDEX.

- Abortive scheme of 1875, the, 72, 357  
 Abyssinian Expedition, line of communication of the, 150, 285  
 Aden, 307  
 Administration, Buxton on Military, 304  
 Adts, Major, 71  
 Afghanistan, 83 to 91, 96, 401  
 Aldershot, 337; the Division at, 383-4  
 Alderson, General, 32  
 Alexandria, 344  
 Allies, 9, 28, 133, 256, 370, 400  
 Alsace-Lorraine, 165  
 Ampthill, Lord, 180  
 Anglo-Turkish Convention, the, 3, 13, 58  
 Anti-English feeling in France, 38  
 Antwerp, 202  
 Army, necessity for an, 370  
 Army Corps, an, 120, 211  
 Army Corps, the two at the Jubilee Review, a sham, 75 to 81, 211; do not exist, 87; unsupported by other trained troops, 151; not nearly ready for mobilization, 158, 386; no guns, 229; no horses, 251, 378; should be mobile, 305, 371; their head-quarters, 337; a third corps might be raised, 341; less than £300,000 required, 358, 379  
 Arsenal, a second, 336-7  
 Artillery, batteries reduced, 15; officers reduced, 16; dingy appearance of foreign, 18; increase of Italian, 19; volunteer field guns, 22 to 25; France and Italy, 65; our deficiencies, 66; on the outbreak of war, 70; horse artillery destroyed to create transport, 77; Sir Frederick Roberts, 143; reduction wasteful, 155; German horse artillery, 166; Switzerland and Roumania have more field guns than we, 203, 381; reduction, 206, 312; our proportion of field guns insufficient, 211; the small Powers, 228; several patterns of guns, 233; the old scheme, 249; auxiliary, 299; special requisites, 322; volunteer, 323; condemned batteries should be saved at once, 328, 364; ranges, 366; marine, 389; India, 399  
 Attack formation, our present, 105  
 Australia, 4, 81, 406  
 Austria, 3, 29, 188  
*Austrian Cavalry Regulations*, the, 16  
 Auxiliary forces, artillery, 15, 20 to 25; no proper organization or equipment, 67, 379; in our scheme for home defence, 105, 341, 385; Reserve men should be drilled in the, 283. *See* Militia, Volunteers, Yeomanry  
 Baker Pasha, 10, 106  
 Baker, Sir Samuel, 31  
 Barrington's *Problem of Invasion*, 33  
 Barttelot, Sir Walter, 348  
 Batoum, "Free Port" of, 14  
 Belfort, defence of, 153  
 Belgium, 4, 5, 9, 12, 29, 55, 381  
 Bellemare, General De, 45  
 Bengal cavalry, 95  
 Beresford, Lord Charles, 300, 301  
 Bermuda, 33, 264  
 Big guns, our, 43, 109  
 Billot, General, 45  
 Bismarck, Prince, 58, 186  
*Blackwood*, criticisms in, 9 to 27, 133 to 137, 397-8  
 Blockade, 374, 396  
 Boulogne, Napoleon's army at, 342

- Brackenbury, General; relative expenditure of the Powers, 14, 107 to 112; Royal United Service Institution, 24; present system, 41; defence, 346; invasion, 394  
 Brassey, Lord, 377, 389  
 Bray, Captain, 392  
 Bressonet, General, 45  
 British Army, cost of the, 14; foreign opinions, 39; strength, 78; defects, 140; at the present time, 171; in the Peninsula, 172; details, 208; necessity for the, 370  
 Bulgaria, 3, 201  
 Buller, Sir Redvers, 242  
 Bunsen, Herr von, 3, 4  
 Burgoyne, Sir John, on the Militia, 218  
 Burmah, 401  
 Buxton's book on Military Administration, 304  
  
 Calder and Villeneuve, 343  
 Cambridge, the Duke of, 46, 267  
 Camp of exercise, a second, 336-7  
 Canada, 43, 81, 124, 198, 263  
 Canadian Pacific Railway, 52  
 Cape of Good Hope, 276, 307  
 Capitation grant for volunteers, 360  
 Cardwell, Mr., 201, 235  
 Carnarvon, Lord, 68, 106  
 "Catamarans," 342  
 Caucasus, the, 4  
 Cavalry, 16; German, 113, 166; Russian, 116, 189, 293; ours, 143; sword and carbine, 293  
 Centralization, 111, 169. *See* Decentralization  
 Channel Islands, 33, 36  
 Chelmsford, Lord, 242  
 Childers, Mr., 238  
 China, 34, 36  
 Churchill, Lord Randolph, on Belgium, 6; the "Economists," 12; the Peace Society, 29; admits the inefficiency of the present system, 41; as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 71; on army expenditure, 108, 123; his plan, 143; no foreign politician like him, 183; his power, 206; fortifications, 261; the Presidential system, 401  
 Claser, Captain, 40, 79  
 Clyde, the, 67  
 Coaling stations, defence of, 5, 10, 32, 34, 49, 65, 122, 131, 260 to 263, 307, 354, 357, 370  
  
 Coast Guard, the, 68, 109  
 Coastline, our, 347  
*Cologne Gazette*, the, 400  
 Colonial allowances, 276  
 Compulsory service, Conscription, 20, 62, 127, 132, 144, 145, 296, 308, 327  
 Constantinople, 5  
 Continental organization, 192  
 Corps of observation for Belgium, 5  
 Corsica, 10  
 Counter-attack, 10; against Russia, 28, 96; no troops for, 43, 229, 358; all important, 370, 375, 377  
 Courses of instruction for officers, 266  
 Cyprus, 32  
  
 Decentralization, 164, 169, 274, 300, 333, 338, 391 to 393  
 De Galliffet, General, 45  
 De Grancy, 79  
 De Miribel, General, 45  
 Delhi manoeuvres, 400  
 Denmark, 11  
 Dépôts, 142, 236  
 Derby, Lord, 36  
 Difference between British and Continental necessities, 259  
 Disarmament, danger of, 5  
 Discipline, 279, 294, 361  
 Dover, 207, 261, 351, 395  
 Dress, military, 290  
 Drill, 174, 242, 319, 333, 361, 363  
 Du Cane, Sir E., 207  
 Dufferin, Lord, 92, 401  
 Durand, Captain, 16  
  
 Edinburgh, 67  
*Edinburgh Review*, the, 54 to 71  
 Edis, Colonel, 360  
 Education Department, 270  
 Egypt, 3, 10, 31  
 "Eight Army Corps," 26  
 Elswick, 354  
 Employment for old soldiers, 117  
 England unready for war, 4, 9, 41  
*England in the Mediterranean*, 38  
 Englishmen prone to avoid military questions, 1  
 Enlistment, various periods of, 277  
 Equipment of cavalry, 293  
 Ersatz reserve, 157  
 Esprit de corps, 282  
 Estimates, cutting down the, 8

- Examinations, in Germany, 181; in England, 244; our text books bad, 246; should be practical, 270
- Expenditure on army and navy, 6, 8, 30, 33, 110
- Explosives, new, 64
- Février, General, 45
- Field guns for home defence, 14, 21, 211, 380
- Fiessinger, Captain, 38, 40
- Fighting forces at home, table of our, 227
- Fireships, 342
- Firth of Forth, the, 68
- Food, we depend on imported, 260, 355, 376, 396
- Fortresses, 11, 14, 70, 261, 349 to 351, 371, 376, 381
- France, 4, 15, 35, 45, 164, 187
- Fraser, General Alexander, 368, 371, 375, 381, 398
- Fremantle, Admiral, 51, 79
- Galliffet, General de, 45
- Gentlemen in the ranks, 294, 325
- Germany, 3, 28, 36, 114, 149, 153 to 170, 180
- German cavalry, 113, 166
- "German Legion," the, 288
- German view of Mr. Gladstone, a*, 3
- Gibraltar, 31, 65, 128, 206, 261, 264, 314, 346, 349, 350
- Gladstone, a German view of Mr.*, 3
- Goltz Pasha, 127, 198, 244
- Goodenough, General, 24
- Goorkhas, 93 to 95
- Gordon, General, 31
- Gordon, Sir Henry, 31
- Grancey, Mons. de, 79
- "Great General Staff," the, 184, 359
- Guardian*, the, 311
- Guns, supply of big, 352 to 354
- Hale, Colonel Lonsdale, 176
- Halifax, 33, 276, 351
- Hardy, Mr. Gathorne, 26
- Hartington, Lord, 44, 91, 403
- Harwich, 351
- Herat, 88
- Hohenlohe, Prince Kraft of, 233, 322, 325, 364
- Holland, Indian army of, 103, 127
- Home battalions mere depôts, 75, 98, 142, 236, 282
- Home, Colonel, 26
- Honourable Artillery Company, the, 224, 380
- Horse artillery, reduced, 16; should be our strong point, 17; Italian, 19; English, 19, 22, 70; the Jubilee Review, 75; no reserve of horses, 77
- Horse Artillery and Cavalry*, by Major Schlieben, 16
- Horses, no reserve of, 77, 109, 118, 167, 213, 305, 309, 378, 394
- Ideal organization, 307, 317
- Imitation of foreign armies, 126
- India, 4; defence of, 5, 141; Russian intrigue, 7; harmful revelations of weakness, 8; England tied to, 12; native states, 27; variety of tribes, 34; native army, 44, 82; the Nizam, 86; Madras troops, 90; Presidential system, 91, 401; native officers, 94; separate army for, 99, 103, 127, 141, 143, 239, 385; army of, 282
- Individual responsibility, 175
- Intelligence Department, our, 266; the foreign, 8
- Invasion, 33, 342-7, 393, 399
- Ireland, 210, 302, 334
- Ironclads, 354
- Isandhlwana, 242
- Ismailia, 344
- Italy, 19, 28, 31, 45, 64, 69, 183, 188, 272
- Jingoism, 13
- Jubilee Review, the, 43, 75, 211, 383
- Kimberley, Lord, 44, 91, 92, 403
- King, Major, U.S. engineers, 124
- Knollys, Colonel, 15
- Langston Harbour, sham attack on, 382
- Languages, study of, 267
- Lawson, Sir Wilfrid, 8, 34 to 36
- Leith, 68
- Lewal, General, 45
- Lines of communication, 150, 285, 372
- Local troops, 263 to 265
- Localization, 42, 240, 274, 304, 333
- London, 50, 70, 123
- Lonsdale Hale, Colonel, 176
- "Luck and Pluck," school of, 2
- Lytton, Lord, 92, 401

- Magazine rifle, 32, 109  
 Maiwand, panic at, 27  
 Majuba Hill, panic at, 280  
 Malleson, Colonel, 30  
 Malta, 31, 261, 264, 346 to 350  
 Manchester, 354  
 Marines, 98, 387 to 389  
 Maurice, Colonel, 397-8. See *Blackwood*  
 Mediterranean, the, 30 to 33, 264, 383  
*Mediterranean, England in the*, 38  
 Medway, the, 349  
 Mends, Admiral, 67, 131, 251  
 Mersey, the, 67  
 Merv militia, the, 85  
 Messes, expense of officers', 295  
 Metropolitan fortification, 50, 70  
 Military Education Department, 270  
 Military opinion, the, 61  
 Military ports unarmed, 33  
 Military system needs changing, 9  
 Military training in schools, 298  
 Militia, the, 215, 218, 284 to 288, 330  
 Militia field artillery, 23  
 Militia reserve, 209  
 Mine-fields, 350 to 352  
 Minuteness of preparation, 47  
 Miribel, General de, 45  
 Mobilization, 42, 147, 167, 240, 249  
 Modern weapons, deficiency of, 233  
 Moltke, Count Von, 168, 180, 184  
 "More reticence needed," 7  
  
 Napier's *Peninsular War*, 172  
 Napoleon's scheme for invading England, 342  
 Navy, the, 3; not big enough, 11, 43; protection of coaling stations, 49; new inventions, 64; other navies, 66; skilled opinion, 68; coast defence, 69; our food supply, 260; Lord Charles Beresford, 300, 391; home defence, 346; an unscientific view, 354; reduction of estimates, 356; General Fraser, 368; lines of communication, 372; blockade, 374; requirements, 377  
 Nepal, 86  
 Neutrality of Belgium, 9, 29, 55  
 Newfoundland, 36  
 New Guinea, 36  
 New Zealand, 81  
 Night marches, practice of, 270  
 Nugent, Colonel Sir Charles, 346 to 348, 360  
  
 Officers, artillery, 16; training, 121, 177, 242, 361, 366; pay, 186; deficiency of, 230 to 233; 265, 289, 317, 332, 365; over-examined, 244; extravagant, 245, 290; of the society novel, 263; exchanges, 274; general officers, 267; of the present day, 332; militia, 217, 285, 289, 331; volunteer, 222, 331; promotion by selection, 264; plain clothes, 363  
 Old soldiers in the ranks, 277 to 279  
 One-year volunteers, 321  
 Orders in the field, 391  
 Ordnance Inquiry Commission, 73  
 Organization, 80, 300, 307, 317  
  
 Panic, risk of, 5, 27, 281  
 Paper blockades, 36  
 Parliamentary interference, 45  
 Party politics, 330, 381  
 Pathans, 95  
 Pessimism, 346, 348  
 Picton, Mr., 8, 35, 36  
*Pioneer of Allahabad*, the, 400  
 Plymouth, 65, 261, 349, 350  
 Portsmouth, 65, 261, 314, 349, 364, 382  
 Preparation in peace time, 72  
*Present Position of European Politics*, the, 4, 6  
 Presidential system in India, evils of the, 91, 401 to 404  
 Promotion by selection, 264, 263  
  
 Quebec, 125  
 Quetta, 403  
  
 Railway, Canadian Pacific, 52; Russian Asiatic, 5, 37, 57, 83, 84, 190, 373  
 "Randolph's Folly," 263  
 Ranges, artillery, 366  
 Ravenhill, Colonel, 118  
 Ray, Colonel, 23  
 Recruit in their own counties, regiments should, 240, 334-5  
 Reserves, our system of, 78; a failure, 113; militia reserves, 142; cannot be called out for training, 156; 1st class army reserve, 227; no drill, 283; volunteers, 320  
 Reserve of horses, 77, 109, 118, 167, 213, 305, 309, 378, 394  
 Reserve of rifles should equal the number in use, 33; will have to be increased, 109  
 "Reticence needed more," 7

- Revue Militaire de l'Étranger*, 187  
 Richardson, Colonel, 23  
 Rifles, reserve of, 33, 109  
 Ripon, Lord, 92, 401  
 Roberts, Sir Frederick; native states of India, 27; our organization, 41; Indian garrisons essential, 46; minute preparation, 47; could organize a new system, 48; present system wasteful, 62; his Indian reforms, 82; evils of the Presidential system, 91-2; native army, 95; a Russian war inevitable, 97; separate army for foreign service, 100, 102, 273; cavalry reform, 116; no need for conscription, 133; a twelve-year service for India, 141; the general situation, 142; Russian cavalry, 189; short service, 239; old soldiers in the ranks, 277 to 279; conscious of danger, 346, 379, 391  
 Roumania, 203, 381  
 Royal marines, 98, 387 to 389  
 Royal United Service Institution, 23, 347  
 Russia; Bulgarian affairs, 3, 4; high offensive power, 12; compulsory service, 20; a probable enemy, 28; a dangerous neighbour, 34; finances, 37; power of attack, 44; not yet ready to attack India, 56; Afghanistan, 83 to 96; Skobelev, 88; most modern of all armies, 114; cavalry, 115, 189, 293; organization, 188  
*Russia and England in Central Asia*, 89  
 St. Cyr, Gouvion, 117  
 St. Helena, 131  
 Salisbury, Lord, 3, 58, 59, 255  
*Saturday Review*, the, 341  
 Schell, Colonel von, 17  
 Schlieffen, Major, 16  
 Schools, military training at, 298  
 Schools, regimental, 248  
*Scotsman*, the, 204  
 Secret preparation impossible in England, 8  
 Seeley, Professor, 271  
 Separate army for India, 103, 127, 141, 143, 239, 385  
 Servière, Captain, 16  
 Sheffield, 354  
 "Short service," 18, 42, 44, 99, 107, 152, 234 to 239, 274  
 Siam, French intrigues in, 36-7  
 Sikhs, 94-5  
 Simla Army Commission, the, 27  
 Simmons, Sir Lintorn, on the militia, 219  
 Singapore, 99  
 Skobelev, 88  
 Small-bore repeater must soon be adopted, 109  
 Smartness of dress, 18, 20  
 Smith, Mr. W. H., 73, 135  
 Soldiers, old and young, 277 to 279, 282  
*Soldier's Pocket Book*, the, 48, 170  
 Spezia, 65  
 Staff College, 267  
 Staff Department for England, 318  
 "Staff, the Great General," 184, 359  
 Staff School, the German, 178  
 Stores, cutting down the, 338; deficiency in, 43  
 Stanhope, Mr., on artillery, 15, 21, 113; his Military Board, 71; reduction of stores, 74; reserve of horses, 118, 167; has done less than was expected, 119, 167; unrepentant about his artillery reductions, 205-6; his committee, 349 to 352; memorandum on the estimates, 357; acknowledges the deficiencies, 379  
 Stewart, Sir Donald, 92  
 Submarine mining, 66  
 Suez Canal, 31 to 33  
 Swift cruisers, 356, 397  
 Swiss army, 20, 114, 124, 193 to 198, 366, 381  
 Tactical knowledge, necessity for, 241  
 Thames, defence of the, 349  
 Thompson, Captain, 22  
*Times*, statement in the, 399  
 Tonquin, 10  
 Training of officers, 122, 177, 242, 361, 366  
 Training of troops, 171 to 181  
 Treasury, the, 63, 72, 110  
 Tunis, 10, 272  
 Turkey, 4, 29  
 Tyne, the, 69  
 United States, the, 124, 200  
 Unreadiness of England a danger to the peace of the world, 353  
 Villeneuve, 342  
 Vladivostok, 28, 97

- Volunteers, 39, 40 ; in forts, 50 ; easily recruited, 127 ; history, 219 ; only liable for service in a crisis, 286 ; organization, 319 ; reserves, 320 ; patriotism, 360 ; not taken seriously enough, 387 ; no field guns, 380
- Volunteer artillery, officers, 16 ; field guns, 20 to 22 ; cheap, 25 ; a pamphlet, 66 ; garrisons, 143 ; needed at places like Portsmouth, 364
- Von Bunsen, Herr, 3, 4
- Von der Goltz Pasha, 127, 198, 244
- Von Hohenlohe, Prince Kraft, 233, 322, 325, 364
- Von Moltke, Count, 168, 180, 184
- Von Schell, Colonel, 17
- War Office, 110, 266, 275, 300, 303
- Weakness, open revelation of, 8
- Wellington on the militia, 218
- West Indian garrisons, 276
- Weyl, pamphlet by M., 39
- Wilkinson, Captain, 39, 76
- Wimbledon, 222
- Wolff, General, 45
- Wolseley, Lord ; artillery, 25, 26 ; inefficiency of present system, 41, 62, 74, 137 ; preparation, 47 ; *Soldier's Pocket Book*, 48, 170 ; his expeditions, 111 ; his suggestions, 140 ; our field artillery insufficient, 211 ; short service, 239 ; drill, 241, 333 ; Mediterranean, 164 ; separate army for India, 273 ; first army corps, 316 ; conscious of the danger, 346 ; mobilization, 346, 378, 391 ; "perpetual motion," 392
- Woolwich, 51, 337, 354
- Wortley, Colonel, 115
- Yeomanry, 115, 224
- Zanzibar, 36

THE END.

## SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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"THE grave statements which he brings forward are well worthy of the most careful consideration of all who are responsible, directly or indirectly, for the maintenance of the British power at home and abroad. Assuming that this country will find itself in the event of war without allies of any sort either by land or sea, the author of 'Greater Britain' is able to enumerate a most formidable series of shortcomings. It is undoubtedly a grave fact that the most alarming criticisms on our military system, though to be sure they are not always consistent, come from our most successful and experienced soldiers, such as Lord Wolseley and Sir Frederick Roberts. The pressure of the Treasury in peace-time is relaxed during war or war-scares; but we agree with the writer in the *Fortnightly* that 'wild waste' after 'strict saving' does not avail to set matters right, especially in these days of rapid mobilization. The reliance on our insular position and our command of the sea may be pushed too far; apart from the danger of an invasion by surprise, such as Napoleon elaborately planned, and very nearly accomplished before Trafalgar, there is the possibility of the destruction of our sea-going trade during the concentration of the Navy in the Channel. Nor is it impossible that the fleet may be paralyzed or crippled by some new invention. At any rate the danger of invasion, as nearly all military experts acknowledge, is real, though it may be remote, and this element must be taken into account in calculating how far our existing forces are equal to the demands upon them. The first of these is the defence of the United Kingdom, then the defence of India, then that of such colonies and dependencies as are not self-protecting, and, lastly, the security of our coaling stations."—*The Times*.

"Ministers are, by the nature of things, the official defenders of what exists; on the other hand, the strictures of the Opposition have their weight diminished by party bias. It is a good thing for the country, therefore, when those removed from both temptations speak out as frankly as the author of 'Greater Britain' does in the *Fortnightly Review*. He takes for his theme the present condition of the British army, and proposes to continue his criticisms in a series of articles. They will be very welcome, whatever their intrinsic merits, as stimulants of public discussion on a matter of the most vital moment."—*The Globe*.

"The second of two articles which Sir Charles Dilke has written in the *Fortnightly Review* on the present position of the British army will attract much attention both at home and abroad. Sir Charles is an alarmist, in the best sense of the word. He has made very careful investigations into the questions of which he writes, and the result is a conviction that in a military



sense the British Empire is not safe. That conviction he feels bound to make known to the world, and when a man whose information is of the best, and who is, moreover, by no means of an impulsive temperament, feels himself called upon to tell us very unpleasant things, it is the part of wisdom to listen to him."—*The Morning Advertiser*.

"With the Fortnightly Reviewer's general conclusions, every patriot must agree."—*The Pall Mall Gazette*.

"The campaign so vigorously opened by the able writer in the *Fortnightly Review* against the regrettable mischief of the present system should command the respect and approval of all those who desire to see the forces of this country derive strength instead of weakness from their system of organization. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished that the physician, who has so skilfully diagnosed the disease, may not be absent from the pending consultation on the patient."—Captain A Court, in *The Army and Navy Magazine*.

"... Calculated to excite the serious attention of the public. . . . There is no doubt that by long and minute study Sir Charles has acquired a vast amount of information on military subjects. His opinions, therefore, will demand careful consideration."—*Birmingham Daily Post*.

"Sir Charles Dilke makes a very true observation when he says that it is not the mere grumblers or unsuccessful men in the Army who are most dissatisfied with the condition of military affairs, for he finds that the best soldiers and most successful leaders bring the heaviest indictments against our present system. . . . The difficulty experienced by all who, like ourselves, desire that England should possess a really serviceable Army, is to get the general public to take an interest in military matters. The task of persuading the people of England that they live in constant danger of seeing the whole fabric of the British Empire crumbling beneath their feet, and that our military forces are quite inadequate for the duties which at any moment they might be called on to perform, is well-nigh a hopeless one. If soldiers and the military Press call attention to our weakness, the cry is that soldiers are always alarmists, and only want more money. If an enlightened civilian says the same thing, the world shrugs its shoulders and asks what on earth *he* can know about the matter. The Army, the Navy, and public policy, are the stalking horses of political parties, and the government of the Army and Navy is allotted with less discrimination than is shown in the election of a director for the feeblest public company. As Sir Charles Dilke truly says, the people of England put their faith in 'luck and pluck,' and if ever an uneasy feeling arises in the public mind it is banished in the same sort of way that most people dismiss the uncomfortable feeling of the certainty of death. After all, the only thing that one can do is to keep on hammering away at public opinion, although not very hopeful of any result. And for this reason we are glad to see an advanced Radical like Sir Charles Dilke enter the lists and endeavour to arouse the people of England to its danger. . . . It is a great thing to have the military question brought before the public by a writer and statesman like Sir C. Dilke."—*The Broad Arrow*.

"Sir Charles Dilke prefaces his remarks by a quotation from Wellington,

which should seriously be taken to heart, to the effect that there is nothing so necessary as to look forward to future wars and to prepare for them. 'Our wars have always been long and ruinous in expense, because we were unable to prepare for the operations which must have brought them to a close for years after they were commenced.' The keynote thus struck, the writer has no difficulty in showing the utter unpreparedness of England for war, and he states that there are a great many Englishmen who trust to the national good fortune and the national courage—'the school of luck and pluck they might be called'—to guard them against dangers which their reason and knowledge lead them to know are real. . . . We hail Sir Charles Dilke's *exposé* of our utter want of national defences with extreme satisfaction. . . . We trust that his utterances will be deeply weighed by all who have at heart the integrity of the Empire."—*The United Service Gazette*.

"In the last of his series of articles in the *Fortnightly Review* on the subject of the national defences, Sir Charles Dilke concludes by saying: 'The net result of the late debate is another commission of inquiry. The English are curiously like the Turks in this. If there is urgent necessity for a reform, they appoint a commission to sit upon it, and then consider the reform is effected.' In taking this view of the case he is somewhat unjust to himself. Animated by the zeal of the reformer, he takes no account of the effect his articles have undoubtedly produced, or the discussion and interest they have excited both in and out of Parliament. Both military and naval authorities have paid him the compliment of making use of the facts he has brought before the public, and though they have not always acknowledged their indebtedness, he has every reason to be satisfied with the thorough overhauling of the whole question which his criticisms have provoked. For this the public are indebted to him, for nothing can be more important than that our position as regards national defence should be clearly understood. The sense of security is the best safeguard against unreasonable panic, just as a false security is a real and operative element of peril if not catastrophe. In this matter there is too much reason to fear that his indictment is well founded, and that the question of national defence is too often considered only with reference to party interests, and this in face of the fact that the continent of Europe is an armed camp, which may at any time become a vast battlefield. The object of the article, however, is not to create alarm, official utterances being in themselves sufficient for that purpose, but to point out the practical steps by which an approximation at least to an ideal condition of home defence may be attained. . . . If the existing condition of our defences be really as seriously defective as it is stated to be in the report the remedial measures suggested are both too limited in scope and likely to be too tardy in execution; while to appoint a commission under such circumstances would seem to prove the truth of the sarcastic comparison between Englishmen and Turks."—*Liverpool Post*.

"The general contention of the author of 'Greater Britain' is undoubtedly sound. The army organization at home does not meet the requirements, and in India also it requires much modification. No soldier of admitted capacity, so far as we know, denies this position. But somehow or other year after year goes by and a thoroughgoing reform is not accomplished.

We shall hazard an opinion as to the causes of this strange dilatoriness. In the first place, it is, as Sir Charles Dilke very justly observes, easier to know what is wrong than to publish proofs of the facts. The best soldiers are those who best know the exact state of things. They are ready to tell their friends in private what they think, but they are not at liberty to put forth their opinions and back them with their names. Accordingly the public has never seemed able to be quite sure that things are as bad as candid writers like Sir Charles Dilke assert."—*The Manchester Guardian*.

"The writer in *Blackwood* makes quite a savage onslaught upon Sir Charles Dilke, apparently on party grounds. And yet a repeated perusal of his criticisms only seems to us to confirm the soundness of the articles attacked. The writer in *Blackwood* does not show that Sir Charles Dilke's facts about the army are unsound. He really only takes a different view of the policy to be adopted by England. Sir Charles Dilke's view is that public opinion is against certain alliances, and that it expects England to be able to defend herself. In that case, says Sir Charles Dilke, she must prepare for defence. His critic says in effect that it is very wrong to reject alliances, that England ought to join with Germany, Italy, and Austria, and that if she does so she need not trouble about her army. This is really no reply to an indictment against the army, and its effect can only be to create confusion in the mind of the reader. The true reply to Sir Charles Dilke would be to produce the two army corps complete, at Aldershot or elsewhere, and to prove that all our coaling stations are adequately fortified, armed, manned, and supplied. This reply, however, is not forthcoming. Sir Charles Dilke has made up his mind as to the general nature of the reform which he will propose. He still holds the opinion which he expressed two or three years ago in a speech made to his constituents, that the solution of our military problems is to be found in the separation of the Indian army from the army for home defence, and in the adoption of genuine short service at home. The arguments in favour of this course are unanswerable, and if any great change is to be made, that which Sir Charles Dilke suggests will probably have the support of the best soldiers."—*The Manchester Guardian*.

"There has always been some difficulty in bringing home to the average Englishman the fact that in an age of armies his own country is for all practical purposes imperfectly defended. Sir Charles Dilke has of late revealed many weak points in the national armour, and has shown how the unreadiness of the War Office extends all over the world, so that the outbreak of a war would throw upon it the necessity of hurrying reinforcements, stores, guns, and ammunition to almost every quarter of the habitable globe."—*The Manchester Guardian*.

"Sir Charles Dilke's suggestions of reform appear to us in the main sound and practical. His main thesis, the separation of the Home and Indian armies, was explained some years ago in a careful speech, which showed that even at that time Sir Charles Dilke had approached the question with a firmer grip of the real issues it involves than is usually acquired by Parliamentary statesmen. The present exposition is an advance upon that speech, because it elucidates better than has yet been done the obstacles which the

connection with India places in the way of a real localisation of the army at home."—*Manchester Guardian*.

"Sir Charles Dilke's scheme for the reform of the army has at length been fully formulated. It is undoubted that Sir Charles's article will have great influence in the committee on the army estimates."—*Liverpool Mercury*.

"So far as a layman can judge, Sir Charles Dilke has hit the right lines in discovering the irreducible minimum, and suggesting fresh and elastic methods for supplying it out of the resources which are undoubtedly available."—*Bradford Observer*.

"A fortnight ago we called attention to the extreme gravity of the general charges brought against the condition of the British army by Sir Charles Dilke in the *Fortnightly Review*. It certainly cannot be said that the detailed statements by which these alarming conclusions are supported are in any way inadequate, or incapable of upholding the grave indictment which is based upon them."—*Guardian*.

"Une série d'articles sur l'armée anglaise qui, à en juger par le premier, sont de nature à produire une vive émotion en Angleterre et à attirer l'attention à l'étranger. . . . Tout le monde reconnaîtra que si Sir Charles Dilke, par ses articles, parvient à ouvrir les yeux de ses compatriotes et à faire introduire dans l'armée anglaise les réformes jugées indispensables par les hommes les plus compétents, il aura rendu à l'Angleterre un service signalé. En même temps ceux qui, à l'étranger, liront ces pages intéressantes, pourront y puiser d'utiles renseignements et y trouver matière à de sérieuses réflexions."—*Journal des Débats*.

"La presse de Londres, et particulièrement *Le Times*, s'occupent depuis quelque temps des articles que Sir Charles Dilke consacre à l'état des forces militaires de l'Angleterre. . . . La partie technique de ce travail, portant sur l'insuffisance de l'établissement militaire de la Grande-Bretagne, soit à l'intérieur, soit dans l'Inde, est d'un très vif intérêt et sera lue avec fruit par tous les hommes du métier."—*Le Temps*.

"In the current *Fortnightly Review* the author of 'Greater Britain' continues his remarkable serial on the defences of the Empire, and sketches out in very exact detail his view of what he calls an 'ideal British army.' What is most noticeable, however, is the emphatic declaration made by Sir Charles Dilke as to the practical defencelessness of our principal coaling stations. This is a subject on which the Royal Colonial Institute has already moved, and many prominent colonists have repeatedly brought it under the special notice of the authorities. Yet, so far, nothing has been done to remedy what is a most serious defect and flaw in our Imperial defences. Sir Charles Dilke justly points out that the British navy should be free for general service, and that in no conceivable case could it successfully defend all the coaling stations. If some of these fell before sudden assaults, it is clear that our great ocean lines of communication would be practically cut, and this is obviously a matter in which every colonist has a very decided interest."—*European Mail*.

"In the *Fortnightly* Sir Charles Dilke continues his valuable papers on the British Army, and replies very effectively to some of the criticisms the earlier articles have evoked."—*The Leader* (Melbourne).

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of providing the necessary batteries which the British public may conceivably be induced to adopt, and which at the same time will answer the elementary requirements of modern military science. The plan is novel, and some of its features will certainly not at first commend themselves to military men. But it must be admitted that the present school of officers, or at any rate a large section of it, has shown no indisposition to consider and to adopt suggestions which involve a grave departure from the hitherto accepted traditions of the service. The readiness with which the Volunteer movement has been supported and developed during the last few years by officers of the regular army, is a proof of this very commendable tendency. That field batteries must be created is beyond doubt, that such batteries cannot safely be intrusted to a purely Volunteer force is a fact which to the professional mind is equally clear. It would no doubt be desirable that a rich country like England should face the situation, and should follow at a distance the example of her poorer but more practical neighbours. In other words, it would be well to enlist, equip, and maintain a force of regular artillery adequate to supply our needs in time of war. But this is a world of 'second best,' and the Fortnightly Reviewer, who in this matter agrees with most other critics, is persuaded that the country, or at any rate Parliament, is unwilling to incur the expenditure which the course referred to would involve. We must cut our coat according to our cloth, and if we cannot obtain a regular force we must at least take steps to ensure that a nucleus of trained men shall be provided which will enable us to make a proper use of the Volunteer element which can undoubtedly be supplied. It is impossible to pronounce any definite judgment as to the success of such a plan as this. That many competent officers will object to it is certain; but at the same time it must not be forgotten that the success of the whole Volunteer movement has been a surprise, and has revealed the existence of a spirit of discipline, self-restraint, and good feeling which the traditions of the service thirty years ago would certainly not willingly have permitted us to depend upon. Until a better solution be suggested it is at any rate worth while to give careful attention to the proposal which has been now made. We have dwelt at some length upon the deficiency of our artillery organisation, and upon Sir Charles Dilke's suggested reforms, for a twofold reason. In the first place, the question of guns and gunners is the main problem of the situation, the test by which our military administration must be tried. In the second place, the mere fact of having a definite affirmative proposal to deal with instead of mere destructive criticism is so novel a development as to demand more than passing attention. As Sir Charles Dilke points out, the idea of maintaining sixteen field batteries in time of peace, with the express object of destroying them and turning them into ammunition columns in time of war, is such a mad arrangement that were it not vouched for in the most serious official documents it would probably be regarded as merely a good joke. Nothing has served the departments better than this argument, based on the *reductio ad absurdum*, and the difficulty of overcoming it is one of the serious features of the situation."—*Guardian* (London).



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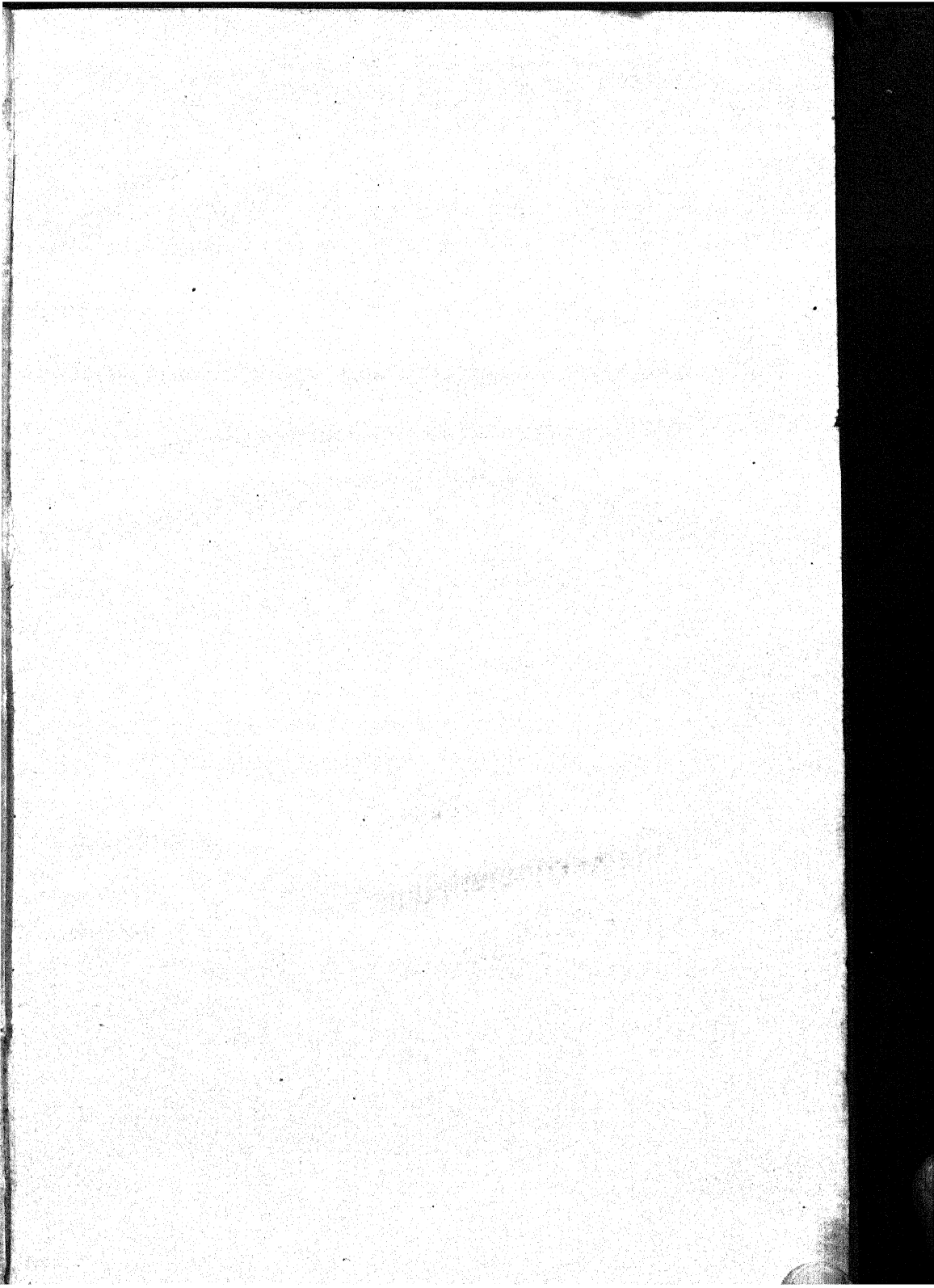
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